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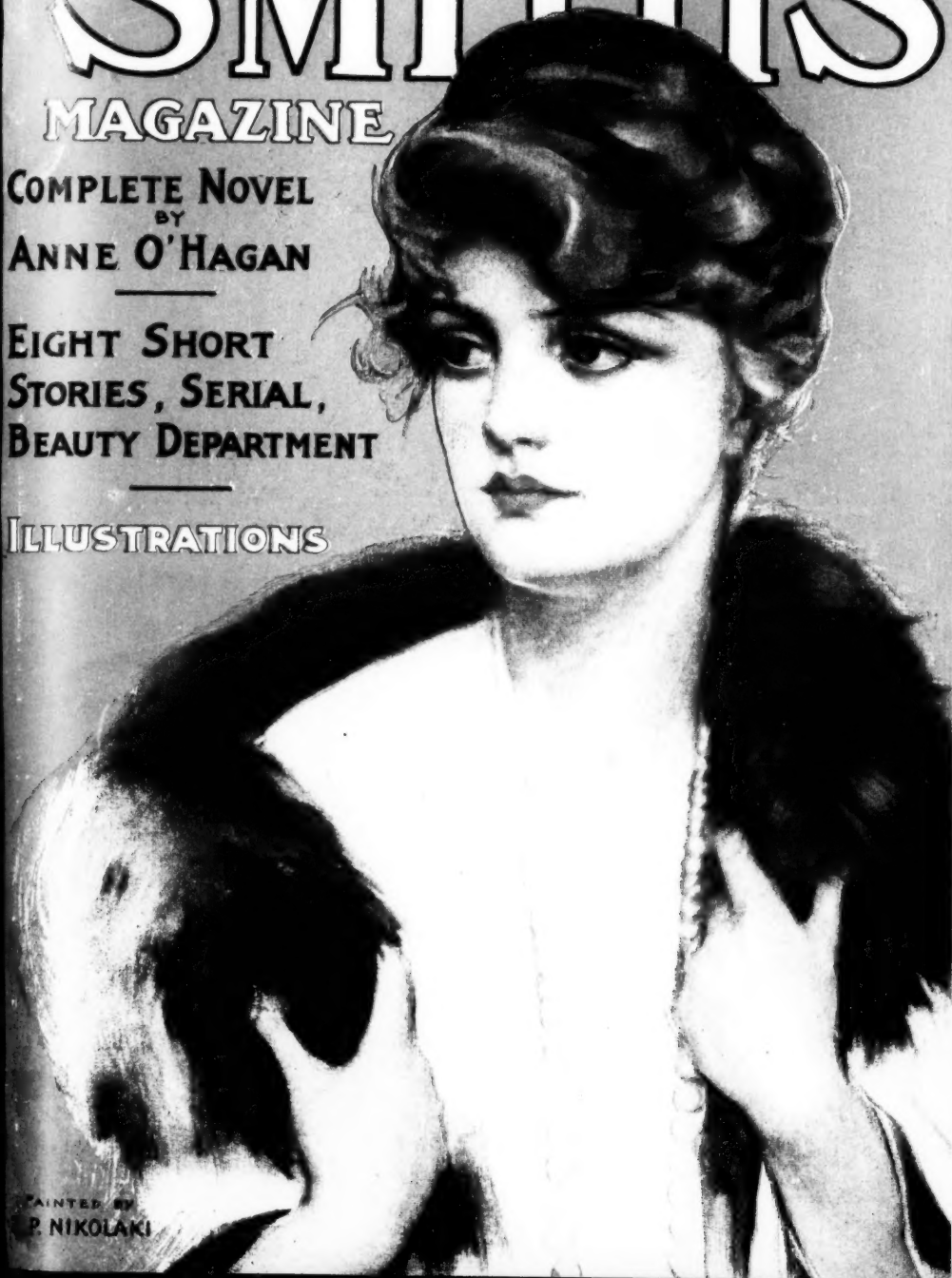
SMITH'S

MAGAZINE

COMPLETE NOVEL
BY
ANNE O'HAGAN

EIGHT SHORT
STORIES, SERIAL,
BEAUTY DEPARTMENT

ILLUSTRATIONS



THE FULFILLMENT

by Rebecca Hooper Eastman



ONE OF THE MOST DELIGHTFUL MAGAZINE STORIES EVER
PUBLISHED. IN THE MARCH NUMBER OF **SMITH'S**.
ON THE NEWS STANDS FEBRUARY THE FIFTH.

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VICTOR RED SEAL RECORDS

GABRILO, ENRIKO, Tenor (Koh-mee'-oni)

Caruso's success in the grimey area attained by an artist in this country. His American engagements have been a continuous creation, the great audience being held spellbound by the eloquent modulation, beauty and power of his voice.

Caruso is a native of Naples and was born in 1873. When he was a mere boy he sang in the church choir of Naples and his beauty of tone aroused the admiration of all who heard it. His father did not encourage the boy at first, but a few years later was persuaded to allow him to take a few lessons in singing. The results were so good, however, and Caruso was forced to seek a

A black and white portrait of Enrico Caruso, a man with dark hair and a mustache, wearing a suit and tie. He is looking slightly to the right of the camera with a serious expression. The background is dark and indistinct.

more advanced instruction. He was

VICTOR RED SEAL RECORDS

She was born in 1964, at Fréjus, but Spanish is her mother tongue. She was raised in a family where she was the only girl. Her father, a doctor, and her mother, a nurse, were both from the Canary Islands. She was the only girl in a family of five children. She was the only girl in a family of five children. She was the only girl in a family of five children.

[illegible]

VICTOR RED SEAL RECORDS

CARUSO, ENRICO, Tenor (*Karlo mark / mark*)

Caruso's success is the greatest ever attained by an artist in this country. His American engagements have been the most successful, and the great audiences have held spellbound by the exquisite refinement, beauty and power of his voice.

Caruso is a native of Italy, and was born in 1873. When he was a mere boy he sang in the churches of Naples, and the beauty of his organ inspired the attention of all who heard of him. His father did not encourage the boy at first, but a few years later was persuaded to allow him to take a few lessons in singing. This finally won the prize, however, and Caruso was known to some fame.





He was eight years old when he met a distinguished baritone singer, who, after hearing his voice, decided that he would give Curcio substantial assistance. He therefore took him to Maestro Voglietti, who was captivated by the beauty and purity of his voice, and began to give him vocal instructions.

one of the most promising young tenors ever heard in Italy. Caruso had made a success in various countries of Europe before coming to America in 1903, but it was his performance at the Duke at the Metropolitan on November 23d of that year which convinced opera-goers that the greatest of all tenors had arrived. This artist recently finished his thirtieth season in this country and his success was greater than ever before.

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THE CARUSO RECORDS (Sung to Italian spoken otherwise etc.) - Pic. Size
Alcornoque (C. Pavesini) (C. Pavesini) Microphone 112 43
Alcornoque (C. Pavesini) (C. Pavesini) Microphone 112 43

... does not expire until 1993, the public
... for many years to come.

Giuseppe Campanella, one of the most famous baritone of the modern operatic stage, was born in Venezuela and in early life played the "cello at La Strada. Young Campanella was confident and outgoing, and undoubtedly a tremendous natural good voice at every opportunity.

In 1898 he was engaged by the Teatro Symphony Orchestra, and after appearing in America to such a great extent that, making his first appearance in a single 1900, he was imported under the direction of Walter Damrosch, then with French's Philadelphia Opera Company, to sing in the situation of a soloist. He was warmly accepted for the Metropolitan, where he was engaged for many years. The record of his touring career is a long one, but he has been in the United States for the last 10 years.

Campanella is a native of Venezuela, and his name is written in the original Italian script.



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SMITH'S MAGAZINE

No. 5

A PUBLICATION FOR THE HOME

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LIVE STORIES

SMITH'S MAGAZINE

Volume 22

FEBRUARY, 1916

Number 5

The Healing of the Hills

By Anne O'Hagan

Author of "Diagnosing Linda," "By Cool Siloam," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY E. C. CASWELL

CHAPTER I.

TO the teachers at "the Powell High," the first Saturday in October was a fixed festivity, like Decoration Day or the Fourth of July. It was the date of the annual chestnutting party in the grove below "McCleary's Folly." Sun, moon, and stars were confidently expected to revolve so beneficently in their courses that the first Saturday would always be clear and crisp, with a winy tang in the air and a sapphire sparkle in the sky; and so acquiescent to human desire, were sun, moon, and stars that there lay not within the memory of any teacher the recollection of a first Saturday when the weather had played the expedition false.

The weather was considered the only possible uncertain quantity in the affair. The grove was always there, halfway down the slope behind the ruined group of buildings. It had been growing for forty years, ever since McCleary had set it out for the delectation of the beautiful young Englishwoman whom he had designed to espouse in second nuptials—to the anger and consequent disinheritance of his son George and his son George's wife. The break had been

so complete that no reconciliation had been possible even when the young woman had found herself, on her wedding eve, possessed of other aspirations than those connected with Dennis McCleary and his big, new estate outside the town, and had eloped with another.

What has been true for a quarter of a century may be expected to be true for another quarter of a century, the teachers in the Powell High believed. Ever since the trees had come into bearing, they had had their chestnutting expedition to the grove. The mere fact that the old man had at last died, last winter, could not be expected to interfere with their annual festivity. There had never been any restrictions upon the use of the place for pleasure parties. All Powellton—with the single exception of Dennis McCleary—picnicked there—mill hands, school children, Sunday schools. The loafing town fishermen had fished in the brook that meandered through the woods; the gunners had known no interference when they had shot partridges and quail in the leafy coverts in the fall. Old Man McCleary, disappointed in the intentions with which he had bought and built the place, apparently scorned to display the slight-

est interest in its fate, from the day when he had locked the front door behind him and had gone down to his office in McCleary's Granite Works and back to his room in the Parker House, instead of to the middle aisle of St. Botolph's Protestant Episcopal Church.

There was, in short, every reason why the teachers of the Powell High, swinging along the road where it changed from a macadam-laid town thoroughfare into a dusty country highway, should have been full of laughter and joyful expectation. The sun was pleasantly warm; the breeze was pleasantly cool; the leaves were gold and bronze and crimson after a touch of frost in late September. The russet stacks of corn in the fields had their heartening aspect of homely, durable prosperity, and so had the great, orange-colored pumpkins left in the aisles where the corn had been cut. The men took turns at carrying, two by two, a heavy basket known to hold a mammoth coffeepot and steaks of satisfying proportions; the young women carried more diminutive baskets in which pickles, sandwiches, cakes, and fruit were packed. And it had been unanimously voted that the first person mentioning algebra, Cæsar's "Commentaries," or any allied subject, should be fined a quarter; and every offense after the first was to be punished in increasing geometric ratio. Why should they not all be merry?

But at the sagging gate of iron, set in the high brick wall with which Old Man McCleary had surrounded his estate, out of deference to the English tastes of his bride elect, the leaders of the chestnutting expedition were confronted by a sign:

**HUNTING, FISHING, AND TRESPASSING FORBIDDEN
UNDER PENALTY OF THE LAW.**

B. McCleary.

"Nonsense!" exclaimed the principal,

suddenly lawless. "That doesn't mean us! We'll go in as usual——"

But he broke off. The gate was not only posted with inhospitable signs—it was padlocked.

The teachers of the Powell High clustered about the barricade, a score of peris of both sexes at the gate of paradise. They declaimed futilely. It was the little woman who had taught algebra for almost as many years as McCleary's Folly had been the accepted pleasure resort of the town who made the first valuable suggestion.

"There are other entrances," she said; "a stile down behind the orchard, and bars at the wood road. They've probably put this up so as not to have the mill people picnicking too near the house and stables."

But on a tree beside the stile, and on a post beside the bars at the wood road, the same invitation to keep away from McCleary's Folly stared them in the face.

"But I was out here only last Sunday——" began one protestingly.

"And I on Tuesday afternoon——" interrupted another.

"The notice has been posted since yesterday afternoon," said the instructor in chemistry. "I was walking here yesterday——"

"Yes," murmured the young lady who taught English composition; and then she blushed and looked elaborately away from the teacher of chemistry, as if her corroboration of his statement had nothing to do with a walk taken with him.

"We must go and ask the Dowds about it," said the leader of the expedition. "Kennelly, I appoint you and Miss Mather a committee of two to go to the Dowds' cottage and find out the meaning of these signs, and to report to us here upon them. They can't be intended to keep us out."

The others murmured an assent to this reasonable hypothesis—when does

an unwelcome prohibition mean *us?*—and the teacher of chemistry and the teacher of English composition started off for the Dowds' cottage.

Never was there a greater contrast between two estates than that between McCleary's Folly and the Dowds' cottage, which stood, embowered now in flaming creepers, opposite the main gate of the big place. One could mark the limits of the Dowds' five acres by the limits of careful cultivation and thrift. Everything was neat, prosperous; just as everything on the great place was wild, overgrown, tumbling to destruction. The Dowds' yellow house, steep-roofed, a story and a half high, shone with paint, while the bricks that composed the Georgian house on the slope opposite were stained and mossy. The Dowds' small windows twinkled; the windows of the great place were partly shattered, partly hung with cobwebs, partly overgrown with vines and shrubbery. The formal gardens of the great place, laid out so magnificently four decades before, were weedy wastes; Grandma Dowd's flower beds were bright and gay even now, flouting early frost by judicious selection and tender care.

Grandpa Dowd was officially caretaker to the great place; but his duties had always been strictly confined to seeing that the timber was not cut and



The teachers of the Powell High clustered about the barricade, a score of peris of both sexes at the gate of paradise.

that the house and outbuildings were not carried away piecemeal by economically minded Italians from the mills. Both he and grandma, suspected by their grim employer of philanthropic designs toward the monument of his disappointment, had been sternly commanded never to lift a delaying finger

against the processes of decay. Having won their promise never to hang a sagging shutter, never to replace a fallen slate or a broken glass, never to remove a weed or to water a flower, he had sold them their five acres on terms advantageous to them, and had permanently turned his back upon the structure he had erected for the housing of the lady who had so ostentatiously declined the quarters at the last.

In the kitchen of Grandma Dowd's cottage, Mr. Kennelly and Miss Mather, arriving in due course of time, found that active old lady spicing grapes and talking to a young man who lounged at her yellow oilcloth-covered table and ate doughnuts and drank coffee. He was a good-looking young man, although his face expressed various unpleasing emotions, such as pride, a sullen anger, suspicion, and disdain of his fellows. Mr. Kennelly observed at once that he was wearing brown homespun knickerbockers, hand-knit golf stockings of the same dull-leaf shade, and a silk negligee shirt to match; while Miss Mather perceived, as swiftly and unerringly, that a lock of his soot-black hair fell picturesquely upon his broad forehead, that his eyes were stormily blue, and that the teeth which were engaged in the mastication of grandma's doughnut were extremely white and even.

"Oh, excuse me, Mrs. Dowd," began Mr. Kennelly hesitatingly. "Miss Mather and I came back—it's the first Saturday in October, you know—we came back from the wood-road bars to see if we could learn from you just how much that sign on the gate of McCleary's Folly really means. Is it designed to keep out the teachers of the Powell High, as well as the—er—townspeople?"

"It's designed to let off spleen, if you ask me," said grandma composedly, at which the brown young man gave an indignant start. "Here, child, want to

try my spice' grape? I always make me a mess of spice' chicken grape after the frost has touched them. I don't think you'll find any nicer flavor anywhere! Yes, Mr. Kennelly, if you ask me about them signs, that's what I'm obliged to tell you. But maybe you'd better go to headquarters for your information. Mr. Bradley McCleary, Mr. Kennelly and Miss Mather. I guess that ain't the right way to introduce folks, but it'll answer. You all know who's who now, and that, I suppose, is the object of introduction, make it how you will."

Mr. McCleary, who, since Miss Mather's entrance, had been standing gracefully posed beneath grandma's shelves of blue enamelware, acknowledged the introduction with a smile that redeemed his features from their expression of egotistic gloom.

"I'm very glad indeed to meet you," he assured the delegation from the city's educational force. "And, while I shall not agree with Grandma Dowd, here, that the notices were intended to let off spleen, they certainly were not intended to interfere with the teachers in their recreation. Grandma, won't you please give Mr. Kennelly the key to the padlock on the gate? And if you'll be good enough to lock up after you, Mr. Kennelly, and to leave the key again with grandma? That will be very good of you."

"Perhaps," said Miss Mather flutteringly, rosily, "if you are staying at the Fol—at—er—the place, you might like to join us some time during the day? I'm sure we should all be very glad indeed——"

Mr. Kennelly heard the suggestion, with no desire, apparently, to second it; instead, he looked darkly and accusingly upon Miss Mather. But the inheritor of McCleary's Folly did not cause the pedagogic jealousy further swift development, for, his dark, pale face assuming again the expression of

thoroughly conscious weariness it had worn even in the act of eating one of Grandma Dowd's crisp doughnuts, he replied formally:

"You're very kind, I'm sure. But I must ask you to excuse me. I am—scarcely fit for society. Indeed, I've come here to avoid it."

"Oh!" said Miss Mather, round-eyed and round-mouthed, abashed, and a little offended. And Mr. Kennelly said, shortly, that they must be getting back to the others, and that he would certainly see that the key was returned to grandma, and also that a less exclusive spot was selected by the teachers for their next outdoor festivity, although to-day, unfortunately—

"Quite unnecessary, I assure you," Mr. McCleary interrupted Mr. Kennelly's ungracious and ungrateful speech. And then, by way of emphasizing the contrast between himself and the unfortunate gentleman who had been stricken so suddenly with the most virulent of emotional diseases, he said, almost pleadingly, to Miss Mather: "I trust *you* didn't think me unmannerly in declining your very kind invitation. You know, I am sure, that there are times when one is not fit for company."

"Of course there are!" she declared warmly, mollified at once by the appeal to her deeper understanding. "Come along, Ted—Mr. Kennelly."

B. McCleary stood in his graceful pose beneath the blue agateware until the teachers were out of sight. Then he dropped down again into the wooden chair at the end of the table and moodily stirred his coffee.

"Of course, you know your own business best," remarked Grandma Dowd, tasting her spiced grape with a professional air, "or, if you don't, you think you do, which will amount to about the same thing; but if you ask me, you can't stay up there with any manner of comfort."

"Comfort!" sneered B. McCleary, as Dante, from the *Inferno*, might have sneered at the standards of an effeminate Florentine. "Comfort!"

"Well, call it keepin' clean, then," grandma amended pacifically. "Keepin' clean, and dry—"

"There's a roof over my head."

"Not much of a one. You'll need to have it patched up considerable if you calculate to live there this winter."

"I have no money for patching roofs."

"Well, if you have no money for patchin' roofs, all you have to do is what I told you when you scared me out of a year's growth, comin' in on me like you did this mornin'. Come down here and stay as long as you're a mind to. I don't make much claim for my spare room, except that it's bright and warm and water-tight. We shingled the roof last spring, and the pipe from the settin'-room stove goes right up through. There's a good mattress on the bed and two real comfortable chairs. And if you're goin' to write, like you say, you're fixed complete. There's a big flat desk there, steady as steady, and with drawers down the sides, and all."

"Why, who has taken to literature in the cottage?" asked B. McCleary, dropping for the second into unaffected human interest.

Grandma chuckled comfortably.

"Nobody in the family," she replied. "Grandpa Dowd ain't any more of a hand to write, or read, either, than me. But I had a young lady boarder for a spell last summer, and the summer before, that's a writer, or tryin' to be. A poetess," added grandma, unimpressed by the word. "And I put in the desk and a new hair mattress for her."

"I didn't know you ever took boarders, Grandma Dowd," said the astonished Mr. McCleary. "Especially poetesses."

"Well, it just happened, so to say."

One day in May, about three years ago, when the orchard was in bloom and the lilacs and all, an auto stopped at the door and a young lady got out, and she allowed she wanted to board with me. It was the lilacs and my narcissus drew her—they *was* real pretty, too. She was a pretty young thing, and it was kind of hard to refuse her, but I did. I told her I set a plain table, and was too busy with my hens and my flowers and vegetables to have time to be cookin' extras or doin' fine washin', and all that. But she was one of the real set kind. And by and by it comes out that she's one of those Wendells my sister lived with so long, and that was so good to her when she was took sick and all. So—she had her way, the young lady. And she comes, off and on, whenever she's a mind to, ever since. She calls it her asylum, the land knows why! There ain't nobody here but Grandpa Dowd 'n' me. I guess she won't be needin' much of any asylum long—she's engaged to a doctor down in Jersey. That's where she comes from. But that's how I come to have a real comfortable room, all fixed for a writin' person. You're more than welcome to it, Bradley."

"You're the same kind soul you always were, granny," said Bradley, speaking more naturally than he had spoken before and looking affectionately at the little old woman. "I don't know what I should ever have done without you when my poor father and mother used to send me on those awful visits of propitiation to the old man! Every year—do you remember? Queer old curmudgeon! He wasn't exactly brutal to me, of course. But indifferent—really, profoundly, everlastingly indifferent! If it hadn't been for you and Grandpa Dowd—"

"S-sh! It wasn't anythin', what we did. We was only too glad to have you. We always did like children around—do yet, for that matter. I

never could understand the sort of folks that didn't like children just because they never happened to have any. We was always glad when your pa and ma sent you on to Powellton, Bradley, and your grandpa wouldn't know what to do with you around the Parker House, and would send you out to us to be took care of. And that's one reason—because I remember you as a little boy, I mean, and because you seem like that little boy to me still, Brad, for all your inches—that I can't help bein' real sorry to see you—oh, kinder grouchin' at life. That's what it is, you know. What right have you got to be grouchin', a young fellow like you, healthy and handsome and educated and—well, not a pauper, even if your grandpa didn't leave you nothin' besides the Folly—and engaged and all!"

"You've made one mistake in your careful computation of my blessings, Grandma Dowd," stated Bradley, with a consciously bitter composure. "I am no longer engaged."

"What! You have broke with that nice, sweet girl——"

"Another mistake, grandma! The nice, sweet"—but his voice could not go on with the mockery—"Miss Penrose has broken with me."

"Bradley McCleary! What cause did you give her?" Grandma Dowd's eyes were bright and blue, like tempered steel, behind her silver-bowed spectacles. "What cause did you give her?"

"Upon my word, no cause, grandma! The truth is—— Oh, I don't want to talk about it. She never underst—— That is, I dare say we were incompatible in temperament. But it was she who discovered it, and broke the engagement."

"Hunf!" Mrs. Dowd made an explosive exclamation of disbelief. Her lips opened over her excellent set of china teeth. Then they closed again, rather snappily.

"Well," she said, dismissing the topic

of temperamental incompatibilities, "well, are you goin' to stay in the spare room with me, or are you goin' to camp out in that hurrah's nest of a place up on the hill?"

Bradley, it seemed, was going to camp out in the hurrah's nest, but if she would let him come down to the cottage for his meals, he would be eternally grateful. However well equipped he was by taste for the life of a disillusioned hermit, he did not know how to prepare sustenance for the character. Grandma Dowd sighed, and yielded.

"I'll be along up by 'n' by," she said, "soon as ever I've sealed up this spice' grape, to see what I can do to make you comfortable. And of course you can eat down here with us. When you ain't on time—and you won't be, most generally—you'll find victuals on the back of the stove."

She watched him cross the road, push open the sagging iron gate that the Powell High School teachers had left open, and mount through the brown weeds and grass that overran the driveway, toward the wreck of a home on the hill.

"McCleary's Folly!" she muttered. "Well, they all have to go through with it, one way or another, menfolks, and leave the monuments of it strewin' the country. It's better he should be buildin' his at twenty-eight, I s'pose, than waitin', like his granddad, until he's nigh on to fifty."

A boy in the telegraph company's uniform came pedaling up on a bicycle. He left it leaning against the green picket fence while he brought in a yellow envelope. Grandma Dowd scanned the superscription, asked conversationally who could be telegraphing her and about what, offered the messenger a doughnut, and finally proceeded to read her telegram.

"It's just as well Bradley didn't take the spare room," she said, when she

had digested its contents. "Where do I sign? Say, boy, would you mind goin' out in the back field, there, where Grandpa Dowd is fall plowin', and tellin' him to come in and hitch up old Nellie? Tell him Miss Wendell's comin', and I've got to drive in to meet her. I'd hitch, myself, but I've got to get this spice' grape sealed. Seems like I've had nothin' but interruptions all mornin'."

CHAPTER II.

Doctor Penrose, bringing his jerky, old-fashioned, tinny little car to a halt in front of his shabby, old-fashioned house on a side street in Salesport, looked anxiously toward the windows. Madeline was not visible at any of them. She had told him that she would be on the lookout for him, and would be ready for a ride with him down to Gloucester, where young Doctor Hardy had called him in consultation. They were all calling him in consultation, these days, since he had won so many victories over inoperable appendicitis. She ought not to keep him waiting!

He whistled, and, at the sound, a collie came bounding from behind the house. But Madeline did not appear. Frowning and scolding into his straggling grayish beard, Doctor Penrose dismounted from the car and stamped noisily up the path between the chrysanthemums.

"Madeline! Oh, Madeline!" he shouted impatiently from the front door.

There was a sound of some small object falling to the floor above, a scurry of footsteps, a penitent call from the head of the stairs.

"Oh, father! You're never back so soon? How can you be? You've neglected your patients shamefully. I'm so sorry I'm late. I'll be there in two seconds—one!"

He went up the stairs. Madeline had rushed through the hall to her own



"We came back to see if we could learn from you just how much that sign on the gate of McCleary's Folly really means."

room at the back of it. In the alcove where she had been sitting, above the front hall, a newspaper and a portfolio had been dropped to the floor in her haste. He stopped to pick them up. The paper was a New York one, three or four days old; and from the portfolio had fallen an envelope directed to "Bradley McCleary, Esq., Care of the *N. Y. Enterprise*, Park Row, New York City." Doctor Penrose frowned more darkly than before. Then he said half aloud:

"Perhaps it's an old one."

But that hypothesis was abandoned when he found that his fingers were smudged with wet ink.

"The silly little fool! Damn the fellow!" said Doctor Penrose.

His daughter, returning, hatted and cloaked for the ride, saw what he still held in his hand. Her face, which was oval, ivory white, and wistful, yet with a certain look of gravity and nobility, flushed to the roots of her pale-brown hair. But she met her father's inquiring eyes composedly.

"I see by the paper that Bradley's play the other night was a failure—a bad failure," she said, taking the tell-tale envelope from him and replacing it in her portfolio. "I thought perhaps I ought to write to tell him we were sorry."

"You need convey no sympathy from me! And do you generally direct your envelopes before you write your letters?" asked the doctor grumpily, going downstairs ahead of her.

"Well," said Madeline, dimpling a little, "the address was the only thing I was sure of knowing how to write, this time. I—hadn't made up my mind what to say—if I—if I—wrote."

"I don't think I'd bother to send him my condolences, if I were you," said her father, motioning her into the ramshackle car. "Conceited jackanapes! It'll do him good. How do you know the play was a failure?"

"The papers made fun of it. And—and it was withdrawn after the third night. Oh, father, how can you?"

For Doctor Penrose had received this incontrovertible evidence of the play's failure with a loud chortle of amusement.

"I can't help it, my dear! It must have been colossally bad. Is it the play you quarreled over?"

"I don't think it's quite fair to either of us to say that we quarreled," objected Madeline, with dignity. "I—I did say that I thought the plot of the play absurd and some of the situations simply lugged in by their heels——"

"I should call that a promising beginning for a quarrel! But I guess you were right. You're a better judge of plays, daughter, than of men. I never have understood what you could see in Bradley McCleary!"

They were passing the grounds of the Salesport Academy. The little boys were going out to football practice. Some of the big boys were running toward the boathouses; the canoes were on the river. Madeline watched them all through a mist. If only her father would not seek clumsily to diagnose her feelings! If only he would understand that with a spiritual hurt, as with a physical sore, there must be no constant, inept probing! And if only he could

understand that Bradley McCleary was to her now what he had been when first she had seen him, running across the grounds of this very same Salesport Academy—the dearest boy! Only, of course—one had one's dignity, one's pride, one's decent self-respect! One could not allow one's love to be relegated to a position of unimportance in the world of one's lover's interests! And that was what had happened to her. Bradley had found other things more exciting, more absorbing, in New York, after he had betaken himself thither, than the possibilities of their love. He had, for example, found Stella Fontaine! She was glad her father had never guessed about Stella Fontaine!

By and by the doctor's growling comments upon her lover—lover no longer!—had subsided to a rumble and a hum, deep in his throat. She could think about what she pleased; she could live again her life as she had been wanting to live it ever since she had read that cruel, flippant, entertaining review of Bradley's first dramatic effort! She could go back fourteen years, to the time when she was ten, and had first seen him.

She had been walking slowly past the academy grounds in charge of her nurse, who had had a gardener friend on the other side of the hedge. Suddenly a big dog had borne down upon her, the nurse had screamed and run away, and the dog—she supposed now it was merely a huge, playful puppy!—had seized her sash ribbons, and the world had reeled terribly about her. And across the grounds had come running a boy—a big boy, she had thought him then—a brave boy, a saving boy! And when she had dared to open her eyes, and to cease the cries with which she had been rending the air, she had looked up into such a bright pair of blue eyes, black-browed, black-lashed, into such a handsome, frank, proud

young face! He had worn a sweater of the Salesport maroon, with a big yellow "S" upon it, indicative of sporting honors already attained. He had had running shoes on his feet. He had been a splendid being, an athlete, a hero, a rescuer of females in distress, like any knight in the fairy book her mother read her in the evenings.

And her nurse had come back and had taken her and the thrilling story—carefully edited—home. And her father had thanked the hero, and had sought to bestow upon him largesse in the shape of coin. And the noble boy had spurned the gold. And her mother, her gentle mother, with the pale-brown hair waving away from her saintlike forehead, had said that they must have him to supper. They had had him to supper, and had learned that his father and mother were traveling—had been traveling for two years—and that he was at the academy all the time, except when he went to visit a queer old grandfather, who wasn't particularly keen about his visits, in a place called Powellton, where an amazing edifice, something like a ruined castle on the Rhine to her imagination, called "McCleary's Folly," was the chief piece of architecture.

And she had told him that, while his mother was traveling, he might share hers. She had been solemn and excited about it, she remembered. Ah, when had she not been solemn and excited in her relations with him? And he had been grateful, and the dear, gentle mother had laughed and sighed.

And then, when he was nineteen, and college had just opened its doors to him, her mother had died. And his tears had mingled with hers, and he had kissed her, and had promised that he would always be her brother. And he had come sometimes to Salesport in the long vacations, and had stayed in the changed, going-to-seed house, where the doctor shut himself up in his study

and brooded and lost his practice and forgot to send out his bills, and things went downhill generally.

Probably it had been pity that had made him say he loved her, that day he had found her crying because the grocer had been importunate in regard to his account. It was just after he had been graduated from college. And the traveling parents had gone down on a mid-ocean wreck, and they had been forlorn children together, although, of course, he had never known his parents well since he had been a little tadpole of a fellow, and their going meant no change in the manner of his life. And he was going to be a great writer, beginning in lowly enough style, to be sure, as the cub reporter—how she had laughed at those words!—on the *New York Enterprise*. And she was to worry no more about grocers' bills, for he was going to be rich, as well as famous and great. And, anyway, even if his plays did not bring in immediate fortune, there was always Grandfather McCleary. Even though Grandfather McCleary had given no sign of affection for him—tolerance was all that he had ever received from the old man—still, there was no one else to inherit his grandfather's money. So they would be comfortable as well as happy ever after!

And, meantime, would she listen to this outline for a play—a real play, mind you, with real human beings moving about in it on really human errands, none of your gold-paper-and-paste effects? And she had always listened, and she had heard—which is quite a different matter from listening—and she had commented, wisely and well, her whole heart set upon making her intelligence his servant. He had declared that when the play was produced, her name should shine beside his upon the billboards.

But no one would take that play. Or the next. Or the next. He used to spend the most reckless sums of money

running up from New York on the midnight train of the night preceding his "day off," and running back on the midnight train of the day off itself, just to be with her, just to talk with her about the stupidity of managers and stars, or, better still, about his brilliant new ideas; just to hear the silvery cadences of her voice, and to look into the starry sweetness of her eyes. Yes, she *might* say those things to herself, since he had said them so often to her, and had written them, in the fat letters that used to come each day! It was *not* vanity to remember what he had called her. It was merely an exercise in a memory system.

And then he had met Stella Fontaine. Stella was—in her profession as in her name—a star; not a great star, but a little twinkler, whose first appearance in the rôle had been due to favoritism—so her enemies said—and whose place in the theatrical sky was far from being an assured thing. Stella had her moments of talking gloomily about an Australian season, or a vaudeville season, or about performing for the movies. Stella claimed that her lack of fixity in the firmament was due to no lack of genius on her part, but to the absolute failure of playwrights to produce anything that the public could endure to see for four consecutive weeks. Give her a decent play, she said, and she'd show them!

She had said all these things one night at a little dinner given by the wife of the dramatic critic of the *Enterprise*, at which Bradley McCleary had been present. And the first result of that dinner should have been gratifying to Madeline's thrift—and was not! Bradley had saved the price of his ticket to Salesport the next Thursday and had taken his latest scenario up to Stella Fontaine's studio apartment, instead of to the shabby sitting room behind the doctor's shabby office. And Stella had told him just what the play

needed—which had been chiefly the removal of all characters from the stage except the female star, and the introduction of certain new matter that would enable her, Stella, to give her celebrated scream; she had won such reputation as she had on a scream she had given in her first stellar performance—the scream with which she had learned of her lover's intention to throw her over for an advantageous alliance with another. She had accompanied the scream by kicking violently on a sofa upon which she had flung herself.

That had been the beginning. He had written quite fully to Madeline his reasons for abandoning the almost-weekly trips to Salesport. He had sketched a brilliant future, in which there would be no waiting for penurious grandfathers to come to their senses in the matter of an allowance, or to die, or for a reporter's salary to expand, or for anything! Miss Fontaine—a charming, cultivated woman, by the way, and one whom he was sure Madeline would find congenial—had promised to produce the play when a few trifling changes had been made. It would be put on in the fall; he and Madeline would be married, and they would be launched at once upon a career full of the excitement of first nights, interesting people, and what not.

Madeline admitted, as the car puffed into Gloucester, that she had felt an immediate and unreasonable antipathy to the author of their prospective fortunes, and to the new sort of life her lover outlined for her. But she had tried to be sympathetic. And she had said how much *she* would like to see the play. And seeing it—it came by registered mail, not by Bradley himself as bearer—she had ventured to say that he was falling into the very vices of theatricalism against which he had most loudly declaimed. And he had told her—by return mail—that he

was having the most valuable experience possible to the budding playwright—he was working in collaboration with a person experienced in stagecraft!

It had happened at this time, while their correspondence had been in this delicate stage, that Doctor Penrose had made a cure in an inoperable case of appendicitis; and, instead of being a cure wrought upon a poor patient, it had been upon a rich patient, who chose to be very munificently grateful. Not only had the doctor's achievement been bruited abroad, to the increase of his clientele, but a larger check than he had seen for a long time had come his way. He had pooh-poohed Madeline's reminders of the butcher, the baker, and the candlestick maker, and had insisted that she should have a little visit in New York. She was looking peaked, he had said, and he had prescribed, as a sure cure, a week in New York, with a hundred dollars of spending money in her pocket. He had not been as cheerful since her mother died.

Of course she had been glad to go. Of course she had wanted to see Bradley's friends, even her supplanter in criticism, Miss Fontaine. And Bradley himself—how she had wanted to see him! The air would clear between them, she knew. So she had accepted the doctor's gift without too many qualms on the butcher's behalf; she had kissed her father gratefully, and had gone off to visit her second cousin Drusilla, in Brooklyn.

She had come back at the end of five days with eighty of the hundred dollars still unspent in her pocket, and her engagement broken.

She did herself the justice—or Bradley the justice—to remember that she had not accused him of being in love with Stella Fontaine. That, she had decided upon meeting the lady, was out of the question in the case of any young man who had ever known a real human being! She had accused him of nothing

worse than of having written a preposterous play—a cheap, foolish play!—and of being more deeply interested in something else than the condition of their love for each other. From which they had proceeded to say quite impossible things to each other—and she had asked Second Cousin Drusilla to send for a cab for her, as she had just happened to recall a pressing reason for her immediate return to Salesport.

The eighty dollars, she remembered, had wreathed the butcher's face in smiles.

That had happened last spring. She had not heard from Bradley since. But she had subscribed for a New York Sunday paper, and had read its theatrical announcements with the most feverish interest. And she had known to the very clocktick the time when the curtain was to rise upon Stella Fontaine in "Lady Pandora's Jewels, a Drama in Four Acts, by Bradley McCleary." She had loved him enough to hope that the play would be brilliantly successful; perhaps, if all the world united in declaring her strictures false, Bradley might forgive them to her. He could then afford to be magnanimous, indulgent, superior. And she would let him be anything he pleased to be, if only—if only——

After all, what did she know about practical stage requirements? Wasn't it much likelier that Miss Fontaine knew? Of course, Miss Fontaine couldn't be expected to know anything about literature or sincerity or simple, human feeling; it would be asking too much to ask for such knowledge beneath those elaborately careless, copper-colored puffs and curls and escaping tendrils of hair. But, however impossible her coiffure, she might know what would go; and Bradley, triumphing, might forgive stupid, false criticism. And perhaps he had missed her during these months. And——

But the New York papers that she

had devoured on the day after the opening performance had made her see that Bradley would not be able to come to her in the rôle of a forgiving, patronizing conqueror. They had passed him over, if they were heavyweight papers, with a disdainful line or two—"crude melodrama, with nothing new in character or situation"; "an effort which does not merit serious review. If this be the measure of Mr. McCleary's capacity, the stage has lost nothing by his previous inconspicuousness." If they were of lighter sort, they had ripped the poor *Lady Pandora* joyously to pieces—and, indeed, she lent herself to the process; they had mocked her as the author had created her and as the star had interpreted her. And, after the third performance, the play had been withdrawn, and Miss Fontaine was giving out interviews to all who would interview her, in which she said:

"Never again shall I try to aid a young playwright! An older one recognizes the value of expert stage advice, and will make reasonable changes, but the novice never! I really thought that 'Lady Pandora's Jewels' showed a certain crude promise, and I tried to get Mr. McCleary to make it usable. But the colossal, ignorant vanity of the beginner obstructed my every effort. I shall play Shakespearian parts in a stock company, in Akron, during the remainder of the season. Next season I shall open in a part that Pinero is doing especially for me."

Poor Bradley! She was glad, Madeline, as they stopped before the hospital in Gloucester, that she hadn't accused him of being in love with the contemptible, absurd, spiteful little creature!

Would the lesson be enough for him? Would he learn from it where his heart had its true home? Could she write to him without offense? Would he hate her more than he had

hated her that last ugly, rainy afternoon in Brooklyn, when they had looked upon each other's unknown faces, and had said, so evenly, so convincingly, so convincingly, those awful, untrue things? He had hated her that afternoon. "Little-minded" she had been to him; a "woman who would be a drag upon every aspiration of a man." And he had dared to impute to her the thing she had been so careful to avoid suggesting—jealousy of that coppery, curly, baby-staring cat!

"You can't, I suppose," he had said, "conceive of a man's having a sincere relation with a beautiful woman in which the wretched sex element does not enter. You are, I suppose, jealous of the work I am doing with Miss Fontaine."

And she had answered—she could still hear the icy, trickling sweetness of her own voice:

"No, I don't think that is quite true. You see, I've not been able to think of her as a beautiful woman; only as a quite cleverly painted manikin. And she's so obviously far from a lady that I couldn't question your taste to such an extent as to be jealous of her."

No! After that last conversation of theirs, it would probably be better to let Bradley make the first move—if a move he cared to make—if he, too, had been lonely, lost, unhappy, all these weeks! And if he made no move, why—she deserved her fate. It would be but justice if a girl who had not learned, by twenty-four, to dissemble her criticisms of a man's work, should go without her lover all her days!

Then she was ashamed of the flippant form of her repentance. After all, they had always intended to have a life of honest thought and word. Until he had fallen upon that silly notion of an immediate theatrical success, truth had been Bradley's watchword for his plays—truth in so far as he could see it. He was not very humble—he was inclined

to think that he had fathomed the ultimate realities at twenty-eight—but at least he meant to describe the world as he saw it. Growth would come, she was certain. He was to be sincere in his work, and they were to be sincere in their relation with each other. Well, if her first effort at a difficult sincerity had ended thus disastrously, she would not, therefore, abjure sincerity. She didn't want a marriage in which feminine charm and indirection and suppression were necessary to keep her husband's love. She had known women whose happiness with their husbands depended upon keeping them well fed with the products of the larder. It was quite as ignoble to buy marital affection by feeding a man with flattery.

Then, as the doctor came down the steps from his consultation, puffing out his lips and putting on his big driving gloves, she saw again the bright face of the little boy who had chased away the dreadful dog so long ago; she saw the handsome, moody, angry face that had last confronted hers across Second Cousin Drusilla's solemn Brooklyn drawing-room.

"Oh, my dear, my dear!" cried Madeline behind her tight-closed lips. "I want you so!"

For it was not the abstraction, concerning whom it is always so easy to philosophize, Any-Husband, of whom she thought, and with whom, indeed, she could have kept to uncompromising, high terms for living. It was Bradley. She felt his cheek wet against her own as he looked down at her dead mother's face; she felt his boyish kiss of brotherhood; she felt the new kiss which had signalized that new glory that had suddenly flowed into their lives.

"Oh, how I want you!" she said to herself. "What a fool I was to throw you away for anything—anything—anything!"

"Cold?" said the doctor. "Your face

is quite pale. I tell you what it is, my dear—I believe I've made a really valuable contribution to my time. They can save that woman's life—if she cares to have it saved! A poor fool of a Swede! Her husband left her; she says she drove him to it. Sick as she was, I couldn't help telling her the truth. The man a woman can drive away is the one who would leave her if she didn't drive him! Never forget that, daughter. A man you can drive away with anything short of an ax is a man who will run away at the first little rift within the lute, or whatever he may call it! The poor fool says she doesn't care whether she gets well or not. A fine test she'll give my treatment, with that attitude! Selfish brutes, the whole race, humph?"

CHAPTER III.

Bradley opened his eyes upon a room that Grandma Dowd's most vigorous efforts with pail and broom had not succeeded in making very habitable. Large, discolored patches marred the decorated ceiling, paper hung in scabs from the high walls, mold lay thick and gray upon the surface of bureau and table, and the dust of decades was permanently imbedded in the curves and scrolls with which the Victorian walnut had been so plentifully indented. In spite of the windows, widely opened into a tangle of overgrown shrubs that had never been clipped back into the low, thick-growing adornment for which they had been intended, the room had the musty odor of all long-closed places.

"It smells like death and decay. One would say that whole generations had 'passed away,' as our fathers called it, in this very bed. And yet I'm the first person to sleep in it! Nothing ever died here—but a dream and a hope."

A dream and a hope! Ah, but were not they the most real possessions of

the human heart? Could any death be so complete as their death, or any desolation so utter as that filling the place where they had died? Poor old Grandfather McCleary! Yes, his grandson could pity him to-day—could even almost overlook the fact that the unnatural old fellow had left everything he possessed, except this ruined and ruinous estate, to found a Dennis McCleary Workmen's Institute of Powellton.

"After all," said Bradley magnanimously to himself, "that will probably do the world a blamed sight more good than I should ever have accomplished with his precious coin! If we're going to have the absurd system of private ownership, let us, for Heaven's sake, be consistent, and permit the private owners to do what they want with their possessions. Poor old Grandfather McCleary!"

It was the first time Bradley had ever felt any sympathy with the gnarled, taciturn, gruff old man; but it was, perhaps, the first time that Bradley had had the touchstone to character—an experience in disappointment.

From the train of reflections attendant upon the musty odor of the place, he dropped back into the thoughts that had filled his mind since last Monday night. And his face, which had been quite boyish and attractive as he lay upon the pillow, pitying his thwarted, Spartan old ancestor, who had taken up his life within sight of the monument to his failure, grew again bitter and disdainful.

"Unbelievable jealousy!" said Bradley to himself. "Killed by critics out of an absolutely unbelievable jealousy!"

Then his look grew even bitterer.

"Madeline criticized it, made little of it, out of jealousy in the first place," he told himself. "Not, of course, out of jealousy of my power and the possibility of my success, but out of jeal-

ousy of— What an unthinkable cat that vulgar little beast of a woman is!"

He reached a nervous, long-fingered hand toward the reading stand by his bed, and clutched a well-thumbed afternoon paper, two days old. It was folded so as to give him an immediate view of a picture of Miss Fontaine, taken in an athletic costume, with a mastiff at her knee, and of the words that Miss Fontaine had uttered concerning the reasons for the failure of "Lady Pandora's Jewels." He refreshed his memory of her statement—it really needed no refreshing, however.

"It served me right," said Mr. Bradley McCleary, as he finished his glancing perusal of the interview. "It served me right. I deliberately put my own standards into cold storage when I allowed that woman to look at my work! She was not an artist; she was not a lady; she was not a woman! And I knew it the first time I ever laid eyes upon her silly face and her impossible curls. She was a doll made up on the model of a 'Duchess' heroine. She was a—cat. I got exactly what was coming to me when she turned and bit me. But with Madeline it was different. Whatever Madeline pretended, it was jealousy that made her pick flaws in 'Lady Pandora'; it was jealousy that made her talk as she did, that made her break our engagement, that made her fail me when I most needed her. If I had not experienced it, I could never have believed it of Madeline.

"And, of course, it was a jealousy of me as an author—the fear that I and not she would get the applause—that made that Fontaine creature insist upon so many utterly absurd changes. They did ruin the play, there's no question about it. And the newspaper gang was jealous, and knifed me. It's a pretty world—men, women, and New York. I'm done with it!"

He surveyed the ceiling. Stained

and faded were the roses which had bordered it—all but obliterated.

"I've come to the appropriate place," he informed himself grimly.

He looked toward the long mirror set between two doors. Its blurred surface reflected only dim, distorted visions of the objects before it; the gold leaf was gone from its carved and curved frame.

"To the exactly appropriate place!"



"Go away! Go away!" in an indignant feminine voice.

he repeated, and took a certain artistic satisfaction in the completeness of the harmony between his surroundings and his fate.

"I could have stood it all," he added, "if only Madeline hadn't—revealed herself as she did. I never knew that Madeline could be selfish until that week. I always thought——"

But he could not complete, even in his own mind, the sentence. He did not

know how to say, in becoming language, that he had always expected Madeline to be *there*—fixed—however he might wander, soft and soothing, the pillow for his hurts, the balm for his wounds.

"Ah, no, it is the ever-fixed mark
That looks on tempests
and is never shaken,"

he quoted obscurely. Well, her love had not proved of that Shakespearian quality, that was all! And he would not admit to himself that it was this, in the welter of his lacerated vanities, that hurt the most.

He drew a watch from beneath his pillow—a handsome watch, almost the only legacy he had had from his father; a gift that had been found with a pile of useless securities in a safe-deposit box after the *Queen Galatec* had gone down. It was ten o'clock. Grandma Dowd had certainly been a true

prophet when she had foretold that he would sometimes be late to his meals! He sprang out of bed and made his way to the solitary bathroom that the floor boasted; it held a zinc tub that had been the last word in the art of plumbing when Grandfather McCleary had equipped the mansion. He turned at a faucet corroded and hateful to the touch. Of course! The water was not connected! Catch that old skinflint paying a water rent when it was not necessary!

Never mind! He remembered where the brook widened into a pool down in the woods—that would be better than the zinc tub. He had learned to swim in that pool under Grandpa Dowd's tutelage years and years ago. Perhaps it would not seem to him to-day quite so vast a body of water as of old; but it would suffice for a morning tub. He remembered the tingle of the water upon his skin; it was a brook that had its source high among the mountains beyond the city—the mountains that, by the way, he would insure a view of immediately, cutting away the huge bushes that had climbed to the second-story windows.

He slipped on a long bath robe that gave him a somewhat priestly effect, tossed towels and clothes across his



arm, stepped down the dark, wide, dusty stairs, and made his way out into the dense shrubbery that had been designed to screen the stables and offices from the fastidious eyes of the English lady in the dwelling house. It was a thicket now, that shrubbery; and the maple- and cedar-lined drive that led from the stables—what had once been the stables—toward the woodland and thence to the road

formed a darkly shaded avenue now.

Bradley found a sudden delight in it all—in the October sun trying to force its fingers of light through the tiny crevices in the thick growths; in the delicious freshness of the air, once he had passed the gloomy portals of the house; in the scent of drying maple leaves, and of cedar and spruce; in the anticipated shock of the cold mountain water when he should reach the wide, limpid, smiling, brown pool, where the brook paused for a moment in its hurry toward the river.

He forgot the jealous world that he had abandoned; he forgot the impossible and outrageous Miss Fontaine. He forgot Madeline, who had failed him. He whistled as he walked. He had been wise to seek this refuge! He had been instinctively wise to bid the world adieu, and to come to this asylum, even if he was not at all sure what

he was going to live upon in the asylum.

Asylum! Where had he recently heard that word? Oh, yes! Grandma Dowd's poetess was in the poetic habit of referring to the room that was traversed by the pipe from the sitting-room stove as her "asylum." He laughed tolerantly, and stopped the laugh abruptly. Hermits with a bitter quarrel against the universe did not laugh tolerantly, even at the absurdities of others.

The track through the wood was overgrown. He swore, but without anger, at the blackberry brambles, catching his bath robe, scratching his legs. He marked where big winds had blown saplings across the route, or the dead branches of large trees had fallen. After breakfast, he would come with a hatchet and would clear the entrance to his bath. And then, after a few yards of squashy, peaty soil, he came out upon the sandy edge of the pool. The pale-gold quiver of little white birches, autumn touched, was all about it; they made a glow, like a group of candles. He felt half blinded for a second by the stored sunshine of the place—and then he dashed back into the protection of the overgrown path again.

There had been the silver flash of white arms and legs in the pool; there had been the merest second's impression of a glistening red silk cap, with shining black hair edging it. And there had been the quite unmistakable cry, in an indignant, feminine voice:

"Go away! Go away!"

At a discreet distance from the shore of the pool, young Mr. McCleary paused to take breath and to realize the situation. He had sought refuge from an unappreciative world in a hermitage where he and he alone had the right to seek it; he had posted his domain with forbidding signs; and here, at his very first attempt to avail himself of his own hermit resources, the world was

found intruding, and forbidding him to use his own! Trespass notices were shouted at him from the midst of his own pool! Was his brain hoaxing him, or had he really glimpsed, in his startled retreat, a pile of feminine garments whitely massed beneath a big stone?

He thought he could hear scrambling among the bushes. He paused for what seemed to him a reasonable length of time. Then he sent a "halloo" back toward the golden-fringed pool.

"In just a few minutes!" called back a surprisingly tranquil and quite sweet feminine voice. And then, after another busy little silence: "Now you may come!"

"The devil I may!" said Bradley to himself, in some irritation. He looked at his bath robe—it was very worthy as a bath robe, but it did not seem adapted to social intercourse with young females. "Oh, the dickens! It's a darned sight completer than a pair of bathing trunks and a jersey!" The young man quieted his misgivings by a comparison of his attire with that of the July beaches, and strode back as masterfully as heelless slippers permitted.

When he once more broke through the final barrier to the pool, he found a young woman calmly awaiting him. She had damp little black curls shining all about her forehead and ears and neck; she wore a white middy blouse and a short white skirt. A raspberry-pink sweater lay on the sandy little beach, and a glistening silk garment, evidently a one-piece bathing suit, was stretched to dry upon a boulder.

"Good morning!" said Bradley curtly. "I must apologize for my intrusion."

He meant to be extremely ironic. The young woman did not receive his remark in the spirit in which it was intended.

"Oh, that's all right!" she observed casually. "At least, I suppose it is. You're Mr. McCleary?"

"I am."

"Grandma told me that you'd come home, but I never dreamed of your using this pool for a morning bath. I, you see, am obliged to; there is no bath in Grandma Dowd's cottage."

"That is, of course, ample reason for your using any private property that may strike your fancy for your morning ablutions?" said Bradley, nettled by her calm superiority of manner, her entire absence of apology.

"Oh, private property!" The young lady shrugged charming shoulders to express her contempt for that outworn social idea.

"We are still living under that ancient dispensation, you know," Bradley reminded her.

"I know we are. And I'll grant you all the private ownership you want in brick and mortar, stocks and bonds; but not"—the young woman was very firm about it—"not in this." She nodded her head to include the golden shimmer of the birches, and the blue reflections of some late asters in the placid brown pool. "Beauty," she stated oracularly, "is for the eyes that see it."

"But baths, my dear young woman," insisted Bradley, "are for the persons who own the bathing facilities. I don't want to be rude, but this is my tub."

"We shall have to arrange to take our swim at different hours," said the girl easily, calmly.

"Shall we, indeed? May I ask who it is who is claiming a right to share my belongings with me?"

He was conscious of a certain malicious rudeness in this, but apparently something was needed to stir her really impertinent imperturbability. He thought he had succeeded; a little color flicked into her rounded cheek, but her voice was as tranquil as ever when she answered:

"I beg your pardon! I should have told you at once. I am Theodosia Wendell. I have come to stay with

Grandma Dowd for two or three weeks."

"Oh! The poetess!"

"The poet, if you please," said Miss Theodosia Wendell, with a stiffening of a very pretty little chin in which he thought he discerned a shadowy dimple. "There is no warrant for feminizing an art."

"One would, of course, need to see your productions," said Bradley wickedly, "before deciding whether or not the feminizing of the word was justifiable."

Again there was a little spurt of winy-red color in her cheeks, and her eyes—could eyes be both dark and golden?—flashed. But she made no direct answer to the challenge; unless there was a direct answer in her strictly colorless:

"You are the author of 'Lady Pandora's Jewels,' I believe?"

It was Bradley's turn to blush, and he did so—handsomely, completely. He was red from his unshaven chin to the roots of his uncombed, soot-black hair.

"I am," he answered valiantly. Before his eyes danced an exquisitely torturing medley of reviews. Which one of the damned things—the damned, libelous things—had she read?

The faintest of smiles played about her lips for a moment.

"But I'm keeping you from your bath!" she cried, dismissing the unfortunate Lady Pandora.

She slipped on the raspberry-colored sweater, and he had an opportunity of seeing how intensely becoming was the hue to her dark beauty. Then she gingerly gathered up the wet bathing suit, prodded it into a little rubber bag, threw a towel across her arm, and faced the path.

"You must tell me," she said condescendingly, "just when you plan to take your swim in the morning, so that we may not conflict again."

"Do you mean that you intend to

keep on using my private property as your own?" That was his revenge—a clumsy one, too, he felt—for the reference to Lady Pandora.

She frowned, and said impatiently:

"But, my dear Mr. McCleary, I've already told you that I have to use your pool! Grandma's house is not furnished with a bath. I always swim here when I am with her."

"The Parker House, in the town, has, I am told, put up an annex with every imaginable improvement," he suggested politely.

And at this a wave of really angry color ran over the girl's face.

"Excuse me," she said. "I've been very dense. I didn't realize that you were in earnest about the pool. I shall not trespass again——"

"But I wasn't in earnest," cried Bradley inconsistently. "I wasn't in the least in earnest. I was joking awkwardly, unpardonably. Pray use the brook at your own convenience. I mean to be an early riser, after this, and I shall have cleared out every morning before seven."

"You're sure," she wavered, "that you really were not in earnest about that private property?"

"Absolutely certain. I came up here to get away from disagreeable people, and I admit that, at the time I arrived, I thought that term included all the human race. I've changed my mind this morning. There are a few notable exceptions. Please use the woods and the stream as if they were your own. I shall leave up the 'no-trespassing' signs, however, to warn away the townspeople, who have always made rather free with the place. A crowd of teachers picknicked here yesterday. Of course, one doesn't want all the world——"

"Oh, of course!" agreed the scorner of private property and the upholder of the doctrine that beauty belongs to all who have eyes for seeing. "Well, thank you a thousand times. I shall use the

woods as I have used them ever since I began coming to grandma's. I shan't disturb you, I know. I'll keep out of your way. I came here——" She hesitated.

"To work?" he suggested understandingly, with the fellow-artist air.

She sighed, and shook her head.

"No. To think out a problem. I didn't suppose I should ever be able to work again until I had settled it. But I don't know. The woods, the spirit of autumn, the spirit of life—they are insistent, aren't they? One's little personal puzzles sink away, don't they? The creative impulse is irresistible, isn't it?"

Bradley was conscious, first, of a rising up within him of something joyous and expectant, like a child on the morning of a promised picnic. And then came, swiftly and poignantly, the recollection of Madeline. The poignancy seemed to spring from the fact that he had failed her, rather than that she had failed him, as he had so painstakingly insisted to himself all these months. But the pretty poet was looking up at him and waiting his answer.

"Yes," he said, "the creative impulse is strong."

He began to see a charming little woodland drama in the recesses of his mind; a drama, perhaps, of complicated human characters in the most idyllic setting—everything milk and honey except the emotion and the situation of the protagonists. It might be very interesting.

Her pink sweater was lost in the trees, and by and by he slid from his bath wrap and plunged into the pool.

CHAPTER IV.

It was agreed by all Powellton that never had there been a more glorious October. There had never been such days of shining sunshine, such bronze and purple of oak leaves, such riot of

gold and crimson on the maples, such a scent of wild grapes along the wood roads, such mornings of lacy, lovely white frost empearling the fields, such nights of silver moon magic. If you should catechize Mr. Kennelly and Miss Mather, whose engagement was announced at the middle of the month, they will insistently testify to the fact that every night for the whole thirty was a night of a high-riding moon; that every sunset, early aflame across the mountains, was a miracle of rose and amethyst; and that the stars were of a velvety quality and a size usually associated only with the tropics. Even less enraptured observers of climatic conditions, like Grandma Dowd, admitted that there was "an uncommon spell of fine weather." But she always added that such fine weather was tricky—what she called a weather breeder. Look out for a storm when it was past!

She said something to this effect—and said it a little vindictively, too—to Miss Wendell, as that young woman ate a late breakfast of sausage and incomparably browned griddle cakes at the kitchen table one morning.

"Yes, it's another fine day," she admitted grudgingly, in response to Miss Wendell's lead. "We're in for a spell of fierce rain. And a while that'll take all them glorious leaves you've been talkin' about off the trees, and leave then standin' there, shiverin' and naked."

"Dear grandma, you seem to have something against the poor trees!" Miss Wendell's dark eyes—there was no question in Bradley's mind about it now; eyes *could* be both black and golden, black as midnight, golden as the stars—were dancing with health and pleasure; her rounded cheeks were deliciously colored; her curly hair was still in damp ringlets from her morning swim. "Or do you feel, as I do, that a bare tree is one of the loveliest things in the world?"

"Lord, child, I don't have time to be botherin' about the loveliest things in the world. It's as much as I can manage to get through the day's work, without fussin' my mind about whether one thing is handsomer than another or not. Let's see—you come for two or three weeks, wasn't it? Goin' to give me warnin' yet?"

"Do you want to get rid of me, grandma? Am I making you an awful lot of trouble?" Theodosia's voice was wheedling.

"You're givin' me no more trouble than you're payin' good and plenty for," said Mrs. Dowd, with grim honesty. "But ain't you got to get back home, to be fixin' up for your weddin'? Didn't I hear tell it was to be along about Christmas?"

Theodosia stared out through the little kitchen window toward the chicken yard, wire-fenced beyond the hotbed, from which grandma still derived such succulent green vegetables. Her face had changed a little; some of the color had faded, some of the brightness evaporated.

"Yes, I shall have to be getting home before long," she said, without inflection. "But you won't mind my staying a week or two longer than I planned, will you, grandma?"

"If others can stand it," said Mrs. Dowd significantly, "I reckon I can. But I should think that Doctor John of yours——"

"He's very busy. He's going to all manner of conventions and things. He's glad—I mean I think he probably finds it a relief not to have to bother about me."

"Hunf!" said grandma, rubbing her nose, and kindly looking at something on the opposite side of the room from her guest.

"Could I have a little lunch to-day, grandma? Then I'd get out from under your busy feet, and never appear to bother you again until supper time."

"Big enough for two, I suppose?" queried Mrs. Dowd resignedly.

Theodosia laughed.

"Well, wouldn't you rather have him not underfoot, either?" she demanded. "Come, now, confess! These tramps and picnics, on which I take Mr. McCleary, free you from an awful lot of bother, don't they?"

"They don't free me from half as much bother as they give me," stated grandma uncompromisingly, even if a little obscurely. "The land knows I haven't an idea what you want of each other, but I'm ready to swear I don't think it's good for either of you, whatever it is. And I'm fond of you both—especially him. I've been used to seein' him around for twenty years and more. You two ain't no more suited to each other than nothin'. You're the same kind——"

"Grandma, didn't you ever hear of such a thing as a Platonic friendship?" demanded Theodosia, rosy and laughing again. "Didn't you ever hear of an intellectual companionship?"

"Yes, I did. There was a story about 'em in my *Woman's Hearth and Heart*. They got married," finished grandma.

"And lived unhappy ever after?" the girl teased her.

"Land sakes, child, the man that wrote the story had sense enough not to try showin' anythin' about ever after. Well, what do you want I should put up for lunch?"

"Oh, may we have some of that heavenly veal loaf? And some ham-paste sandwiches? And little pickles? We'll get some lemons at the grocery and——"

"Is veal loaf and ham-paste sandwiches what Bradley likes, too?" demanded grandma. There was a grim intensity in her manner.

Theodosia's eyes widened.

"I guess so," she replied. "He always seems to eat all of his share."

"He likes hard-boiled eggs and

lemon-meringue pie for a picnic—always has, since he was a little boy!" Grandma spoke triumphantly, like a person proving a contested point.

Theodosia shuddered in pretty affectation.

"Not a lemon-meringue pie, grandma!" she entreated. "Not if you love me!"

Then she sped away to don her sweater, and Mrs. Dowd shook her head forebodingly.

"They call it intellectual companionship and Platonic nonsense when they don't care a rap what the man puts into his stomach," she informed the bread knife, testing its sharpness against a skilled thumb. "Them two ain't in the least suited; she doesn't know what he likes to eat at a picnic, and she's been on exactly eleven picnics with him in the last fourteen days! She likes the way his hair grows, and that's about as deep as it goes with her! And him—I don't know what in Sam Hill has got into him! What they both need is somethin' real. I'd like to set 'em to weedin' an onion patch—two onion patches, as far apart as possible."

But having her own figurative onion patch to weed, Grandma Dowd was obliged to put out of her mind the emotional and psychological problems that threatened to interfere with the task. She put up veal loaf and ham-paste sandwiches generously; she added hard-boiled eggs, and she hesitated before a half portion of lemon-meringue pie on the pantry shelf. Then she shook her head decisively, and put into the basket ginger cookies instead.

"It certainly won't do," she said, "to give him all he wants. He'd be left in a state of perfect doughiness. She could do anythin' she pleased with him, he'd be that purrin' and content. Not that I'm sure she wants to do anythin' with him. But he never could abide ginger cookies. I'll put them in, and



"Shall we be friends?" Theodosia's hazel-gold eyes were directed appealingly toward him.

see what that'll do toward keepin' him halfway sane."

No compounder of love potions and hate potions ever took more pains with her magical brew than Grandma Dowd with the contents of the neat little picnic hamper.

By and by Bradley, who had heroically kept to his early-rising resolution, and who had had his swim and his breakfast with the Dowds every morning before the young poet stirred, came to the kitchen door.

"Miss Wendell about, grandma?" he asked, after he had made elaborate inquiries on other, unrelated subjects.

"She'll be down in a few minutes,"

said grandma, without enthusiasm. "Are you goin' to be gone all day? Because I told that real-estate man from Manchester that was here yesterday that you'd probably be get-at-able to-day. He said he was prepared to make you a real handsome offer for the Folly."

"I'm beginning to be ever so much attached to the Folly," said Bradley, sitting on the edge of the kitchen table. "I'm beginning to think I don't want to sell out, after all."

"You're just about the age to be attached to folly," said Mrs. Dowd, almost sourly. "But it ain't a good means of support."

"Granny, what's the matter with you? Don't you feel well?" asked Bradley in really concerned tones. "You haven't seemed a bit like yourself for the last few days. Got a—headache or anything?"

"No, I ain't!" snapped grandma. Then she added more amiably: "I dunno but what I'm too old to be botherin' with boarders."

And then the boarder tripped into the kitchen, russet from the crown of her soft felt hat to the toe of her thick-soled walking boot; russet and rose, with her face sun-tanned and health-colored, and her lips adorably red, and a raspberry-colored tie knotted beneath the rolling collar of her flannel blouse. Bradley promptly forgot his interest in grandma's health, and his consternation over her inhospitable hint about boarders.

Grandma watched them set off together. Bradley swung the luncheon packet across his shoulders by a strap. She observed that his corduroy pocket seemed to bulge.

"Don't I give them enough to eat?" she asked indignantly.

Then she looked more sharply. It was a roll of paper that protruded from his coat. Her brow cleared.

"And she had one under her arm," she said. "Maybe they're workin' on somethin' together. Maybe that's what it is. Maybe there's no real harm in it, after all. Still—po'try and—curly hair and all—I dunno!"

Meantime, the objects of her solicitude swung blithely along the highroad, bound for the hill that marked the western boundary of the township. From the top of it, so local pride claimed, one could see no end of interesting things on a clear day—seven other townships, the steeple of the Warren church, twenty-two miles away, six sparkling blue lakelets, Mount Tom, Mount Dick, and Mount Harry, blue against the sky to the north, signifying

the beginning of the real mountain ranges. Bradley professed himself shocked that Miss Wendell had never been up the trail to the summit of Sunset Mountain.

"But there was no one to take me before, or to tell me what marvels were to be seen from its top," she protested. "It's no fault of mine."

"It was high time that you met me!" he boasted.

She glanced at him sidelong from beneath curling black lashes.

"I wonder!" she said meditatively, provocatively. "But won't you admit that it was high time that you met me, too? Please say that it hasn't been altogether a one-sided work of beneficence, our—acquaintance!"

"One-sided!" cried Bradley gratefully. "After the way you've listened to my scenario——"

"But I haven't made any suggestions; have you noticed that?"

"There's something a great deal more helpful than suggestion," stated Bradley, with the conviction of an experienced person. "That is sympathy. You've listened, you've let me talk to you as I would talk to myself about the thing, you've been wonderful! You're a thousand times better than a critic—you're an inspiration."

"I wish I were sure of it!" sighed Theodosia.

"Well, you may be—perfectly sure! Why, Miss Wendell, I came up here determined never again to put pen to paper, in play writing, at any rate! It all seemed so little worth while. No one understood what I was driving at; no one cared! But from the very first day, that mood disappeared—under your influence."

"Nonsense!" said Theodosia, though not fervently. "It was the glorious air, the change from town, the urge of new thoughts in new surroundings."

"It was nothing of the sort! It was

the urge of—the new girl,” he said half flippantly.

She shot a queer little glance at him, half plea, half challenge; it stirred his pulses. But they went on climbing, with no more words. Words, to tell the truth, were luxuries not to be indulged by persons with a due regard for their wind on that steep, twisting ascent.

They reached the clearing on the top, half the work of nature, half of man. At the very apex was a mammoth, flat rock, blackened here and there by the ashes of many a picnic party. Sloping gently away from it was a ledge, overrun with the scarlet of autumn-touched huckleberry bushes, soft with moss. There were trees enough left for shade, but on every side there were clearings for the prospect—as lovely and as varied as had been promised. She gave little exclamations of delight, quoted scraps of poetry, ran from opening to opening among the trees. Bradley found his eyes fixed rather upon her living grace, her color, her bloom, her desirability, than upon the panorama spread beneath them. There was an uprising of recklessness within him.

Suddenly she flung herself flat upon the mosses and the reddened huckleberry bushes growing just below the big boulder. She stared straight up into the bright zenith. She called imperatively to him to come and do likewise.

“You never know the meaning of the jewels in the City of Revelations,” she proclaimed, “until you lie flat on your back on a hilltop, and stare up into the sky with nothing between you and it. Come and see.”

Her hand, small, pretty, brown, beckoned. He went slowly. He was not looking toward the sky, but toward the slim, graceful young figure, the beckoning brown hand. They called him to another adventure than that of the uninterrupted sight of the blue sky. Why should he hesitate? She had been

calling him to that adventure for days, now—ever since that first morning. Why hesitate? She was talking about sapphire and turquoise, but he heard no longer. He could hear only the pounding of the blood in his ears—and one thing besides—Madeline’s voice saying angry things to him across a dull drawing-room.

Pshaw! What had Madeline to do with it? She had broken her engagement. She had failed him. She had been guilty of jealousy—he knew that she had been jealous! Jealous of him, when there had been no shadow of excuse! It was all nonsense for his idiotic conscience to tell him that all this quiver of desire for the girl posing there on the hilltop proved that Madeline’s jealousy had been well founded. She had been jealous, he assured himself carefully, of Stella Fontaine, not merely suspicious of the possibilities of his nature. And, anyway, Madeline had taken herself completely out of his life—had taken herself, had not been driven! Taken herself! There was no disloyalty to Madeline in the determination to catch those fluttering brown fingers in his own, to still the pretty babble of words as he meant to still them! There was no loyalty due to Madeline. She had taken herself out of his life—

“Aren’t you coming? Come quickly. There’s a cloud blowing over the blue—a little, silly, fluffy white cloud, soft as—soft as—”

“Soft as a kiss,” said Bradley, catching the little brown hand and kissing each taper finger tip. “Soft as a kiss.”

He kissed the rosy palm. Then he waited. The blood in his own wrists was pounding; he thought he could feel hers beating beneath the satin of her skin. She did not withdraw her hand. He bent his face toward hers. Her lips were parted; her face was a little pale; her dark-and-golden eyes were full of the strangest light, all made up of chal-

lenge and fright, of invitation and denial. She made a little gesture of repulse with the hand that was still free.

"Don't!" she whispered breathlessly. "Don't!" She warded off the kiss that sought her face.

Bradley drew back.

"Why not?" he asked. "Why not?"

"Oh, because—because——"

She pulled away the hand he still held; she struggled up to a sitting posture; she brushed back her little curls.

"Because? That's no reason," answered Bradley lazily, seeking to repossess himself of the little hand, his eyes threatening her with the just-averted kiss.

But she put her hand behind her, and her look was serious.

"I'm engaged to be married," she told him breathlessly.

"So Grandma Dowd informed me the day before you took possession of my swimming pool," he announced calmly.

She looked at him with gathering indignation.

"You knew? And yet you dared? You knew, and yet you thought that I——"

"Dear girl, you knew whether you were engaged or not! And you know whether you have been flirting with me to beat the band for the past two weeks! You aren't going to be quaintly antediluvian, are you, and to pretend that you had no idea of what you were doing? You aren't going to be a fossil from the early reign of the lamented Victoria, and pretend to be indignant with me for taking your challenge up? You were challenging me, now weren't you?"

She tried for a second to keep her face stiff and angry, but it softened; it broke into sparkle and dimple again.

"It wouldn't be modern of me, would it," she said, "to deny it?"

"Not a bit modern," he agreed heartily. "For—you have been flirting with me, haven't you?"

"Is such a thing as Platonic friendship unknown to your vocabulary?" she demanded, as she had demanded of Grandma Dowd earlier in the day; but her eyes were dancing now.

"It's a useful adjunct to any vocabulary," he said, "but I admit it's practically unknown to my experience. Why keep up pretense? You've been playing the game, haven't you—the game of hearts?"

But her mood of gay acknowledgment, of mischievous confession, seemed to fall from her.

"I'm not sure," she answered. "Oh, yes, I suppose I have been! But I haven't wanted to play it—not with my mind, at any rate. One wants some things with one's instincts, you know, that one doesn't want at all with one's mind. My mind would infinitely prefer a friendship—the sort of understanding, sympathetic friendship you've seemed almost capable of—to another flirtation."

"Another flirtation! That's illuminating! And you somehow lead me to the conclusion that your engagement is not completely absorbing and satisfying to you?" remarked Bradley, with an air of polite and distant interest.

"It would almost appear so," she admitted demurely. Then her eyes grew somber with real feeling. "But that's my own base, trivial nature," she said. "I—oh, if I were a decently stable person, I'd adore my John."

"John! It's the name sacred to male domestic virtue!"

"Don't you try to make fun of him!" cried Theodosia, with sudden heat and passion. "He's worth three of you—three of me! He's—he's——"

"What care I how good he be, if he be not good to me?" paraphrased Bradley. "See here, Lady Theo. I don't want to make fun of your excellent young man. I haven't a shadow of doubt that he's worth thirty of me—even of you, though it's not so easy to

imagine a paragon like that. But what difference does it make if he is the Angel Gabriel himself, and the Archangel Michael also, if you aren't in love with him?"

"But I'm not sure that I'm not in love with him," said Theodosia obstinately.

"Not sure? Well, all I have to remark is this—any woman who isn't sure that she's in love with a man isn't! And, furthermore, if any young woman engaged to me could feel—er—the same species of attraction for another man as you have felt for me—I'm not conceited; I'm merely analytic—why, I'd be blamed sure she wasn't enough in love with me to make it worth while to go on with the thing!"

"That's all very pretty," Theodosia combated his argument, "but put the shoe upon the other foot, Sir Logician! Suppose you were yourself engaged to a young woman, a lovely young woman, the model of all the virtues, one whom you respected as well as loved, and all that, you know—"

"Yes, I seem to have met the phrase."

"Well, don't you think you would ever again feel the lure of another woman's charm? Of course you would! It's your nature—it's your temperament. Well, it might be my temperament, too! Come on, let's open the hamper. Psychologic analysis and mountain climbing are hungry work."

He obeyed her summons and her movement toward the flat rock. There was no use in rushing the affair, especially as he did not know whither he wished it to tend. He was, he admitted, even more interested in her than he had been before, more drawn to her. Through the essential dishonesty of her coquetry there ran a vein of sincerity, he perceived; beneath the modernity with which she was overlaid, the veneer of which she was so conscious and so naïvely vain, was the substructure of the old-fashioned woman, faithful, ma-

ternal, quick to defend her own. She was not merely the player of the always-amusing game of hearts, to while away an autumn day; she was the material of which men's mates are made.

And yet—was she? Did men want their mates to be so subtly compounded, so delicately balanced between Griselda and Circe? On the whole, he was of the opinion that he, at any rate, did not. Yet his russet-clad Circe, setting out the harmless lemonade cups and arranging the wooden plates, eating, drinking daintily, full of desultory speech and easy silences, was an alluring person, up there on the sun-warmed, wind-swept mountaintop. And Circe, as this afternoon, like all their other afternoons, proved, had a pretty little mind and an attentive ear to lend to a man's writings as well as to his love-makings. And Madeline had herself thrown him over! He was free, he was drawn—oh, very powerfully was he drawn!—and his reason could commend the choice of his pulses, if he put reason to the task.

But then she was not free!

Still, he flattered himself that if he should try to oust that John of hers, no insurmountable obstacle would rise before him. It was, if he read her aright—and Bradley, as a beginning playwright, had prided himself upon his correct reading of the female psychology—conscience and heart and perhaps a soupçon of dog-in-the-manger jealousy that now maintained Theodosia's engagement to Doctor John Albright, rather than love and ardor and yearning need. A little pity, too, he supposed seasoned the mixture of her emotions; all women kept pity in their sentimental cupboards, he said to himself, as all housewives kept salt upon their kitchen shelves. But wouldn't she be willing to cast the whole compound overboard in favor of the one he flattered himself he could introduce to her? Yes, that part of it he felt sure he could manage.

And as for himself—what more did a man want than passion and congeniality?

Confound Madeline! Her face, pale with bitter feeling, her lips distorted with a smile of contempt, shaped itself in the crystalline autumn air before him; her voice rang in his ears. "What did I *know*?" she taunted him.

"I never expected to become an anchorite," he told her in his fancy, speaking with considerable heat, "merely because you threw me over! I never promised to go through life without looking at a woman, because of your unreasonable—totally unreasonable——"

"Shall we be friends?" a voice interrupted his imagined argument with Madeline. The silence had lasted too long; his detachment was too complete. Theodosia's hazel-gold eyes were directed appealingly toward him; Theodosia's small brown hand was half outstretched toward his. Theodosia, in short, as was immediately apparent, was tired of being ignored and was making delicate little overtures toward him. Theodosia had no taste for being outside the center of the picture toward which masculine eyes were directed. Better even that she adopt a posture she had not meant to adopt—better that she play the game she had not meant to play—than that she be superseded in the thoughts of the man who was with her!

Bradley came out of his trance with a start. Then swiftly he caught fire from her mood.

"Friends? I don't know about that," he answered deliberately, taking the pretty hand in his own, and taking up, too, the challenge of her eyes. He drew her closer. "Hardly friends, I think," he finished, with his mouth against hers. It was thus that he chose to silence the voices within him.

The kiss was very warm and sweet; it tingled through him; it worked the

magic he had demanded of it. It drove away the visioned face, pale and bitter, sad and scornful. It stirred him more than wine, more than the dreams of success, more than—anything else in the world, except another kiss and another.

"And now," he said finally, "don't you think you had better go home and write to the excellent Doctor John that you will always regard him with the tenderest and most sisterly affectic, but that you regret to say you were mistaken in considering your—— Why, Theodosia!"

For Theodosia, who had responded to the kisses as a golden-hearted rose responds to the rays of the sun, Theodosia, who had been all fire and fragrance and pulsing sweetness against his breast a moment before, Theodosia was weeping.

"A shallow beast is what I am!" she sputtered forth, after the first flood of tears was past. "A shallow little fool! I can't bear to hurt John——"

"But you love me," said Bradley stiffly.

"Oh, I suppose I do! But—what am I going to do with John?"

"You're going to send John jolly well about his business!"

"I can't! It'll hurt him so! It'll break his heart!"

"And you think yourself modern! And yet believe such antique nonsense as that!"

"It's John who isn't modern, and I recognize the fact—that's all."

"See here, Lady Theo," said Bradley, suddenly forceful. "If you can't bear to hurt your John, then you must leave me alone. If you can't leave me alone, you must ship your John. For I find you very adorable—every minute more so. I need you. I want you. And I'm beginning to be very anxious to have you for my own. This is earnest now; no more play, no more flirtation. So will you send John, whom you don't

love and whom you are treating disgracefully, to the rightabout, and will you marry me? I can get a job again upon the *Enterprise* and make enough money to keep you in sufficient comfort until my next play makes us rich beyond the dreams of avarice. And—if you won't do that, will you kindly take yourself off again and leave me to my ancestral estate and Grandma Dowd and all the alleviations that I can muster? For understand! You can't go on playing at passion with me!"

"You were engaged yourself," she replied, with seeming irrelevance.

"But I am no longer engaged. I"—exceeding virtue spoke and addressed a distant, doubting Madeline—"never looked at another woman while I was engaged."

"I wonder," observed Miss Wendell.

"Well, you needn't," snapped Bradley. "I'm telling you the truth. And I want a definite answer to the proposal I have just had the honor to make you."

"If only John—" she began.

"Had a consolation? Perhaps he has. Probably he has. By Jove, he and Madeline would console each other perfectly—I mean if she needed consolation, which she doesn't!" He flushed a trifle shamefacedly. "You know it was Miss Penrose and not I—of course—who broke our engagement. And she needs no consolation, for——"

"Oh, don't be conventional!" advised Theodosia. "I've heard all about her excellent qualities from Grandma Dowd, who's been rubbing them in on me for a month. She does sound frightfully well suited to John. I wish there were some way of presenting them to each other before we—are too blindly happy——"

Her face, wistful, gay, alluring, her eyes, still tearful, though now they shone, called to him.

"You darling!" he cried, kissing her again. "We're going to be too blindly

happy!" He said it emphatically; he insisted upon it.

And for the rest of the afternoon they forgot old loves and old devotions.

It was a wonderful afternoon, yet when Bradley crawled into bed in old Dennis McCleary's tarnishedly splendid bedroom, the room prepared for the bride who had scorned it, he found himself suddenly and most ungratefully possessed of the feeling that he had made a meal on a most tempting meringue—sweetened, flavored, delicious, and totally inadequate to the needs of the human system.

CHAPTER V.

The reasons why the American National Medical League had chosen Salesport as the scene of its annual convention were two or threefold. In the first place, Salesport was not a bad autumn resort, the Gulf Stream doing something mysterious in its neighborhood to counteract the breezes that swept down from the interior hills. In the second place, Salesport was celebrating the three-hundredth anniversary of its founding by intrepid Pilgrims; and many societies and associations had accepted its suggestion about holding annual conventions among its ancient, dignified streets and houses. In the third place, Salesport, in the old days of its glory, had boasted not only its shipping to all parts of the world, its greatness in commerce, its stalwartness in religion, but its intellectual supremacy as well. Salesport ranked as only one degree lower than Harvey or Lister its own Doctor Edgerton, who, half a century before, had made one of those obscure discoveries which periodically change the whole course of the medical profession. For all these good and sufficient reasons, therefore, Salesport was the scene of the annual meeting of the medical association aforesaid, whose deliberations were scheduled to extend over a week.



"Oh, I beg your pardon!" stuttered the young man,
almost colliding with the vision.

But Salesport, in spite of the old shipping to the East Indies, in spite of the great Doctor Edgerton and his wonderful discovery, whatever it may have been, had declined upon somewhat evil days. Salesport's two hotels vied with each other in the poor quality of their accommodations. Salesport's largest place of general assembly—outside its mills, which would scarcely have been suitable for the purpose—was in the Masonic Block, a hall that seated, at a pinch, about six hundred people, which was four hundred more than ever

wanted to assemble in the town itself. It had, therefore, been hard put to it to maintain, on its three-hundredth birthday, its old tradition of hospitality.

By dint of calling upon its private citizens to lodge and to feed its public guests, it had, however, managed to acquit itself creditably on the score of hospitality. And for the meetings scheduled to take place it had erected a convention hall on the edge of the town—something four or five degrees more dignified than the circus tent that adorned the same spot every spring.

Doctor Penrose was full of bustling importance during the days immediately preceding the medical convention. He was to read a paper concerning his new treatment—that in itself would have been almost enough delight to the down-at-the-heels old doctor—but his bliss was additional. He was on the committee of entertainment; it was among his soul-satisfying tasks to see that all of the visiting doctors were congenially housed; to see that there were no unoccupied moments between sessions to bore them; to see that there were motor trips arranged to all the hospitals in all the towns and cities for fifty miles about. His own house was converted into something resembling the dormitory of a boarding school.

Madeline entered into all his plans lovingly and eagerly. The eagerness was due not only to her daughterly affection and her daughterly pride, but also to the necessity that had consumed her for so many weeks now, to work, work, work—never to allow herself an idle moment for recollection, for anticipation, for thought itself.

"They've put off another one on me, daughter!" cried the old doctor, coming into the shabby drawing-room on the afternoon before the convention opened. He held a list in his hand; his face was flushed with cheerful importance.

"Dearest! But I really don't see how we're going to manage another one! You know I'm making up a cot for myself in the office, as it is!" cried Madeline protestingly. "Can't you squeeze him into the rooms they've allowed you at the academy?"

"Nope, can't be done. I've just sent seven extras up there. No, my dear, we've simply got to make room for this fellow. I want him here, anyway. He's one of the most promising of the younger men—Albright, of New Jersey."

"Well"—Madeline yielded the ques-

tion—"he'll simply have to sleep in the office himself. I can go and bunk in with Nina Weatherole, I suppose. Only, of course, I really ought to be at home all the time to see that everything goes smoothly. There's no knowing what breakfast would be like if I weren't here to see to it for you. I tell you what I'll do. It's still warm—I'll sleep on a cot in the summerhouse."

"Sure you won't be afraid?"

Madeline laughed.

"What should I be afraid of?" she demanded. "I've often fallen asleep there in the hammock, anyway, and slept half the night. No, I'm not a bit afraid."

"If it weren't for my asthma—" began the doctor waveringly.

But Madeline cut short his benevolent desire to spare her the hardship of sleeping out of doors.

"But there is your asthma, you know. It's not to be thought of that you should sleep out. But I shall really like it. I can't spare myself any blankets"—she laughed, half ruefully, for the state of the household supplies was hardly a joke—"but I've got the sleeping bag from the last time I camped up in the mountains. I shall be as snug as possible."

And that was how it happened that early on the next morning, when the October sunrise was turning the dew-drops on all the flowers in the Penrose garden into rubies and amethysts and lovely translucent topazes, Doctor John Albright, unable, for reasons that are to appear, to sleep indoors, found himself confronted, when he stepped silently out into the garden, with a lovely morning vision.

A wide hall bisected the Penrose dwelling from the front piazza to the back. Doctor Albright, slipping out from the office, converted temporarily into a bedroom, found himself in this hall. The door to the right led obviously to the street—all the old-fashioned Sales-

port houses were built close to the street line, and all the old-fashioned Salesport gardens were wide stretches or terraces of green behind the houses. Naturally he took the egress to his left, and found himself facing terraces sparkling with dew, flower beds still bright with marigolds and chrysanthemums, and, more startlingly, Madeline Penrose.

Madeline's brown hair was in two long braids hanging down the back of her serviceable, dark-red woolen wrapper. Her eyes were bright as only the eyes of those who sleep in the open are ever bright; her face was full of the freshness and sweetness of the hour. To Doctor Albright, who was bothered by gloomy thoughts, she was the very spirit of the cool, bright autumn morning—*as* wholesome, *as* beautiful, *as* tonic.

"Oh, I beg your pardon!" stuttered the young man, almost colliding with the vision.

"Not at all. That is, I beg yours."

"I—I—were you going into the house?"

Doctor Albright was trying to understand why the spirit of the October morning, in a red woolen wrapper, should be trying to enter Doctor Penrose's abode. His hand was still upon the doorknob, and he was unconsciously preventing the act which he did not understand.

"Yes, if you please." Madeline laughed, and the color flowed up over her face. She went on: "I'm Madeline Penrose, Doctor Penrose's daughter. I think you must be Doctor Albright. My father expected you on the last train up."

"Yes, I am John Albright," said the young man.

Madeline, who had not for several months paid much heed to the looks of young men, decided that she liked his. He wasn't handsome, she told herself immediately. He wouldn't be handsome even to a woman who had had

a less exacting training in masculine beauty than Madeline's had been. But there was something very likable about his blue eyes, behind their tortoiseshell-rimmed glasses, about his broad forehead with the thatch of thick, dark-red hair above it, about his big, humorous, kindly mouth.

"You see," Madeline went on, "we're a trifle crowded in Salesport, and even in our house, and I'm sleeping down in the summerhouse. Oh, please don't look like that! It isn't a hardship—on the contrary, it's such a pleasure that I'm wondering why I don't do it all the time! And I'm on my way in to make myself presentable for breakfast, and to make sure that breakfast itself is presentable."

"I mustn't keep you," said Doctor Albright, pushing open the door.

Madeline vanished within the hall, and he turned his face again toward the terraced garden. Well, the colors of the sunrise were fading, in fact, so it is possibly true that his vision did not deceive him and that it was perceptibly less bright than it had been the second before.

He walked down the steps cut into the green terraces and found a little bench overlooking what had once been an ambitious fountain, but was now merely an overgrown stone basin. He had come out to read for an unenumerable time a letter that he carried in his pocket. This morning he did not begin his perusal at once. His eyes wandered instead to the summerhouse, the little latticed structure, thick-screened with honeysuckle and clematis, at the end of the garden walk. But by and by the friendly, wholesome vision that had, for a second, exorcised his gloom, ceased to be operative. He sighed and opened the sheets and began reading them once more.

They bore a date not more than ten days past. But it seemed to him that he had suffered whole centuries of mis-

ery and loneliness in those ten days. Mechanically his eyes took in sentence after sentence—"Never was worthy of you, dear John"; "Misunderstood my own feelings"; "Shall never forgive myself if you are permanently unhappy for—and I don't understand this any better than you will—it almost seems to me that I could die to prevent your being unhappy"; "Never could be happy together"; "Though the best of me may adore you—and does, truly, dear John—yet there is so much of me that is not the best, so much more of me that is light and frivolous than there is of me that is deep and steadfast." And the name signed to all the rambling self-reproaches and all the pleas for forgiveness was Theodosia Wendell's.

Mechanically, after his eyes had traced again every line of her small, bold, distinguished-looking chirography, he folded the sheets again and put them back in his pocket. It was no fitting preparation for his day, which was to be a busy one at the convention. The ten days that had preceded this one were no fit preparation for that day. But what could he do? There had not been a moment since Theodosia's letter had come to him when one sentence or another of its well-constructed pages had not been hammering his brain. There were moments when he felt almost afraid lest, rising to address his grave colleagues on his theory—which was that, after all, the appendix had another function in human economy than the payment of surgeon's fees, a revolutionary theory that was likely to cause an uproar in Convention Hall—he might begin to repeat to them sentences from Theodosia's letter! If only he could forget it and her for just a few brief hours, just long enough to insure his being able to read his paper intelligibly, and to bear his part manfully in the discussion that was bound to follow!

There was a step on the terrace stairs.

He looked up. Madeline, now in crisply starched piqué, was descending them. She carried a flower basket and scissors.

"All your learned brethren, including my own father," she told him, smiling, "are still sound asleep, and my incompetent Abigail is really outdoing herself in the kitchen. So I have come out again, as you see, to cut some flowers. I'm sorry you didn't sleep well. I'm afraid the office couch—"

"The office couch would be a bed of down," he assured her, "to an easy conscience, let us say."

She looked at him a little gravely. Her eyes, trained by experience to detect the ravages of pain upon another's face, saw that his kindly mouth, for all its firmness, bore the marks of suffering.

"An uneasy conscience?" she said questioningly.

"Isn't that a perfectly good cause for insomnia?" he asked her.

"But you don't look to me like a person who is suffering from an uneasy conscience," she insisted. She did not know why she insisted upon talking personalities.

"Well, perhaps it isn't just that," he admitted. He felt something that he did not remember having felt before in all his thirty-five self-confident years—the desire to pour out his heart, and the desire to show his hurt and to beg for healing. "Let us say, instead, that I have been contemplating what an uneasy conscience I might have had if certain things had befallen me that have not befallen me. Miss Penrose, how great do you consider a man's guilt whose wife does not love him?"

"Guilt? I don't think I understand. Do you mean if he has done something to kill her love?"

"No, I only mean that he wakes up some day and finds that he has lost it, quite without a conscious act or effort on his part. How guilty is he?"

"Of course he's not guilty at all. But"—she looked at him bewilderedly; she spoke falteringly—"but I didn't know that you were married. I thought my father said——"

"I am not married. I was only indicating what might have happened to me if I had been married. I should have come to this convention, then, knowing that I had lost my wife's love instead of merely"—he compressed his lips, he looked her straight in the eyes for a second—"instead of my fiancée's. I'm afraid I'm playing the baby," he added. "Will you believe that I am not in the habit of going about proclaiming all my hurts to every stranger good enough to listen to me?"

"Oh, but I'm not a stranger!" protested Madeline quickly. Then she blushed. "I don't know why I said that. Of course I am a stranger to you. But you see I don't feel like a stranger to any of the men of whom I have heard my father talk a great deal, as he has of you. And—of course I don't believe that you are in the habit of making a confidant of any chance acquaintance. I think perhaps you were moved to speak like this to me because—because I know something about what it means to—to—lose——" Her lips quivered, and she could not go on.

"You don't mean——" he began explosively, unbelievably.

But she laughed, regaining control of herself.

"Yes, I do," she said. "I mean just that. But it happened to me some time ago. You see one does go on living after it, even when one is a woman with no particularly soul-filling work to take its place. So——"

"So you think that I may possibly be able to brace up and bear myself like a decent citizen in these medical deliberations?" He nodded. "I think you're right. If a girl like you—a girl like you"—he repeated the words emphatically, as if they represented to him

all the most flattering adjectives in the language—"could have found any one in the world to be indifferent to her, to be disloyal to her—and could come out of it unembittered—why——" He shrugged his shoulders. "You're right, Miss Penrose. I'll stop whining even to myself about this, and I'll even stop fearing that I'm going to address the assembly with excerpts from Theodosia's letter instead of with excerpts from the after records of appendicitis patients."

"Theodosia? That's a lovely name," said Madeline, half wistfully.

"It is a lovely name. And she"—his hands clasped and unclasped nervously—"and she is a lovely creature. Flame in the wind—sunlight in the dewdrop—anything vivid and insubstantial."

When she heard his voice, Madeline said within herself:

"He'll never get over it, never in the world. Flame in the wind—sunlight in the dewdrop—— I must seem like a bowl of oatmeal mush to a man who has known a woman like that! And probably all men know women like that. Probably Bradley——"

And then she and Doctor Albright obeyed the summons of an ample dame upon the back porch and went in to breakfast.

It was the most wonderful week of her life, she told herself afterward. Even apart from the miracle that crowned it, it would have been the most wonderful. For the intimacy that began that morning out in the bright garden, with the pungent sweetness of earth and growing things in the air, developed magically with each day and each hour of the day. They accepted each other, she and John Albright, as two veterans of some war, meeting upon some highway, might accept each other—they knew, they sympathized, they were able to talk unreservedly. To be sure, she never mentioned Bradley

McCleary by name, nor did she learn more of the flamelike Theodosia than her first name. She could never have talked so freely to any woman, she was sure, as to Doctor Albright. Inevitably a woman's judgments would have been different, colder, perhaps harsher, than those of this man, also wounded of love.

And from talking of their experiences upon this particular field of battle, it was an easy step to talking of all their beliefs and aspirations. When you begin an acquaintance on a bright autumn morning with a baring of your inmost soul, it is difficult to go on with mere trivialities. When the convention was five days old, Madeline felt that she knew John Albright better than she had known any man in her life, not even excepting Bradley.

If only the friendly intimacy had managed to still the pain in her heart! But it did not. Indeed, it sometimes seemed to her that the very freedom of intercourse, the very fullness of understanding, that she enjoyed with this man somehow made more poignant her longing for the one whom she had regarded as her own. She had reached a very comfortable state of numbness until that morning when, by way of friendship, her emotions had begun to wake up again.

"You and Albright seem to hit it off pretty well, Maddy," said her father one night, when she went into his room to tell him good night. He looked at her hopefully, expectantly.

"Father! Don't you, please, become one of those dreadful, matchmaking old gentlemen! I see it in your eyes—all that you are thinking. There's not one word of it true. Of course, we get on very well together—hit it off, as you put it, admirably. But that's all there is to it. So don't have foolish dreams in your silly old head."

"You won't find another young fellow his equal in a hurry," grumbled

the doctor, who persisted in regarding thirty-five as infancy.

"Maybe I won't. But perhaps a lovely Lorelei of a person had already seen him when I came along. So——"

"You're better than any Lorelei that ever combed her hair on the rocks or played music under the waves, or whatever it was those improper persons did."

"Of course you think so! But you're not to allow your silly fancies to run away with you, and you're not even to look speculatively at Doctor Albright. I won't have it—understand?"

She was very firm with him about it, and he grumbled an acquiescence in her tyranny before she finally went away.

But it wasn't the first time the thought had occurred to her. They did get along together remarkably well, she and John Albright. And she knew she was well fitted to be at the head of a doctor's household—she had been at the head of one a long enough time! And it would be a pleasant life, that of the mistress of his hearth. There would be dignity—the dignity of real achievement—in their position. She tried to think contemptuously of Bradley and his poor failure of a play, but the effort hurt her, as if she had tried to kick away her own child's block house upon the floor, or had mocked her little boy's grubby attempt at a garden. The thought of Bradley was still a sharp sword in her heart.

But must it always be that?

John Albright put the question to her on the sixth day of the convention. He was very honest with her. He told her all the psychological truth that he knew concerning hearts caught on the rebound; he spared himself and her nothing in the telling. But—granting everything, admitting everything—didn't she think that there might be a future not entirely devoid of joy for him and for her together? They both admitted that the first flower of their hearts had been

plucked; they both admitted that it had been flung aside. Should there be no more blossoming? He could assure her, on his word as a man of honor and experience, that he considered her infinitely more admirable than the woman who had had it in her power to deal him such a wound; he could assure her that he would be faithful to her, grateful to her, in every thought and deed, if only she would take the pieces of his heart and bind them together.

"It has all been so—so sudden," faltered Madeline, and then began to laugh hysterically at hearing the ancient shibboleth of the unprepared woman fall from her lips.

He laughed, too. But when their laughter had died away, he still pressed for his answer. Finally it came. It was affirmative. Both of them wondered that there was so little warmth and joy in embracing a course that both of them saw to be so full of promise.

CHAPTER VI.

"I have called it," said Bradley, rather emphatically, for it was obvious that Miss Wendell was lending only half an ear to his remarks, "'The Healing of the Hills.'"

"Too sentimental. Doesn't sound modern," objected Theodosia.

But she objected in a manner that was essentially indifferent, and burrowed among the leaves for a more comfortable resting spot for her elbow.

"Why should you be so much afraid of anything you can't label modern?" demanded Bradley, with some annoyance. "The play is not modern; neither is it ancient. It aims, in a modest way, to be true to all time and all place. All art should be universal. Now, in this case, although I have my young inventor, the hero, a twentieth-century individual, and although his problem is a result of twentieth-century conditions, and his failure—the failure of

his new chemical explosive—is a twentieth-century failure, nevertheless, his impulse to flee from the scene of his disaster and to seek solace with nature is as old as man himself. It's older, that impulse. It's the instinct of the wounded animal to creep away from its kind, and not to come back until the mysterious processes of solitude have restored it. The same thing is true—in a lesser degree, I suppose, on account of our so-called civilization—of man. Certainly it is true of him in his more spiritual moments. Look at me, myself. What drove me up here—"

Mr. McCleary's soliloquy ceased abruptly. Miss Theodosia Wendell was sleeping peacefully, infantilely, upon a soft bed of moss and brown leaves.

Bradley favored her with a look that ought to have awakened her, so full of rage was it. It ought to have pelted her like sharp hailstones; it ought to have pierced her like a knife. As a matter of fact, it did neither. She slept on. Not even the cessation of his voice disturbed her slumber, so sound had that become.

"A lot she cares about me and my work!" Bradley informed McCleary's grove, in sibilant accents of outrage.

He stuffed back into the pocket of his corduroy jacket the pages of the new play upon which he had been at work for several days. The look with which he continued to favor the pretty brown creature curled up among the brown leaves very ill befitted the features of a seven-day fiancé.

"Wake up, Theo!" he shouted at last, catching her by the elbow and shaking her with more force than was really necessary. "If you want to sleep, as it's quite evident you do, go back to Grandma Dowd's and get to bed."

Theodosia sat up, shook her head rapidly once or twice to shake the sleep from her eyes, and looked at him mutinously.

"I'm not deaf, Bradley, my dear,



"If you want to make that Powellton train, you've got to get back just as fast as you can. I put off comin' after you 's long 's I dared—"

though I may be sleepy," she informed him, "so you needn't shout. I'm sorry if I have offended you——"

"Oh, not at all!" said Mr. McCleary loftily.

But Theodosia went on as if she had not been interrupted:

"——by going to sleep while you were telling me about your masterpiece." There was something in the

tone in which Miss Wendell said "masterpiece" that was like the light flick of a whip upon a horse's leg—it was meant to sting. "But, you see, although I haven't had an opportunity to talk with you about it, I, too, am engaged with a masterpiece. I'm deadly sleepy to-day," she went on, in a more amiable tone, "because I stayed awake until three o'clock this morning, working on

that poem I tried to tell you about—'Phryne on Orchard Street.' I know you don't like the title, and perhaps I'll change it, though it's exactly what I want to call it. Honestly, if I can only do it the way I see it, the way I feel it and hear it, I do think it might make as much of a hit—though I say it as shouldn't—as 'The 'Widow of Bye Street.'"

"You know perfectly well what I think about it. I don't think the subject is one for a young woman to write about."

"Oh, Bradley! Don't be ridiculous. As if art could be regulated by the rules of behavior for young ladies in a Victorian finishing school! I hope to goodness you aren't going to be impossible and absurd about my work. It isn't milk and water—I never pretended it was milk and water. Life—life in the raw——"

"Oh, rats!" interrupted Bradley, with extreme vulgarity.

Theodosia arose and looked at him icily.

"I think I shall go home—to Grandma Dowd's, I mean. I don't think we are in the mood, either of us, to enjoy each other's society this afternoon. But, before I go, I should like to say one thing, Bradley. I, and I alone, am to be the judge of my own work, both its subject matter and its treatment, and I don't choose to have you sneer at it. Why"—her golden-hazel eyes shot fiery flashes at him—"John Albright, though he was a thousand times more conventional than you, more honestly conservative, never pretending to be a radical—even John Albright was modern enough not to try to impose his will upon my art. And unless I can be free——"

Theodosia was not given to tears, and when her lip quivered and her eyes suddenly overclouded, she made a very appealing figure, there in the depth of the grove. Bradley felt convicted of

abominable rudeness. She was such an exquisite little thing! He apologized. He apologized with his arm about her reluctant shoulder and his lips against her roughened hair. Strange, he told himself, almost the only moments that had been very satisfactory during his week's engagement to Theodosia were those in which he had embraced her. That was still a pleasure, still a keen delight, after five days in which a kiss had proven the silencer of every disagreement.

But he had thought that they were to be so congenial in their tastes! Ah, well, probably no woman could ever quite fulfill a man's expectations of congeniality!

He sauntered back to Grandma Dowd's with her. Grandma, he knew well enough, would greet them with that dark, glowering look which sat so unfamiliarly upon her wrinkled face. Grandma unqualifiedly disapproved of them both, and, according to her candid habit, made not the slightest effort to disguise the fact.

Grandpa was more diplomatic, or perhaps it was merely more philosophic. His brown, gnarled, wise old face seldom expressed disapprobation of the acts of any young things. Colts might act "like the old scratch," as grandma expressed it, without arousing indignation in his gentle breast; chickens might break loose from their fences and scratch all his seed beds, and his only comment was a placid "Whist, woman, whist! It's the nature of the little beasties." So now, in spite of the harangues to which his more energetic spouse treated him during the night watches as to the shortcomings of Miss Theodosia Wendell and Mr. Bradley McCleary, his sole reply was:

"Why fret yourself? It's the nature of the young to be frisky and freaky. Let them have their own way, woman. You'll not stop them, anyhow."

Fortunately grandma's manner of ex-

pressing herself never became so far hostile as to cause her food to deteriorate in quality. In the shining yellow kitchen were still set forth meals that made the mouths of the young lovers water and their eyes glisten with appreciation.

"Have you ever thought how dreadful it would be if grandma began to serve soggy biscuits or fried pork as a means of showing us how much she doesn't like us?" inquired Miss Wendell on this particular occasion, as they strolled away from their interrupted literary colloquy toward the little yellow cottage.

"She does keep on disapproving of us as hard as it is humanly possible, doesn't she?" laughed Bradley.

His momentary anger against Theodosia had evaporated; one couldn't keep angry long up here in this divine air, in this wonderful, changing world of crystalline sunshine and brilliant autumn leaves. He was almost reaching that point in Christian forbearance where he could think without rancor of Miss Stella Fontaine and even of the New York dramatic critics. Of course, therefore, it was easy enough to think without harshness of Theodosia, so agreeably, so alluringly, in the flesh beside him.

"Of course, you understand, she still thinks of us as false to our plighted words, or something quaint and old-fashioned like that," explained Theodosia.

"She can't make that mistake about me," boasted Bradley, "for I let her know as soon as I came up here that it was all over between Madeline Penrose and me. I take it, you have not yet confided to her that you have, in the highest literary style, handed the excellent Doctor Albright the mitten?"

"No, I haven't told her," said Theodosia briefly.

There was a little cloud upon her

face. Bradley looked down and studied it with some interest.

"No regrets, Theo?" he asked. He put his hand upon her shoulder as he spoke. Theodosia wriggled from beneath his touch. He repossessed himself of her shoulder more firmly. "Come, now, don't be pettish! Look up and tell me that you aren't regretting that worthy young man?"

"I'm not pettish," explained Theodosia. "But this is the Powellton high-road, and I don't particularly desire to have the populace see me literally in your clutches."

"The populace," insisted Bradley, "is represented by two Holstein cows, grazing peacefully in yonder field. Don't pretend, Theo! And tell me why you don't like to have me touch you, and tell me, also, if you have any lingering regrets for Doctor John Albright."

"I don't like to have you touch me," cried Theodosia, suddenly whirling upon him, "because I have moments of believing that that is all you care for in me—that quality which makes you like to touch me."

"Oh! So the lady desires something ethereal? She scorns the physical manifestations of passion, does she? She wants a love as incorporeal as that which might be felt by the females in the *Godey's Lady's Book* illustrations of the fifties! How she changes from day to day—almost from minute to minute! It isn't half an hour since you were hauling me over the coals for objecting to the title of your great work, which seemed to me a trifle too earthly. And now——" He paused abruptly. Theo's face was rebellious, angry. "I'll stop teasing you, sweetheart. And I'll love according to any school you may suggest. Only—you'll forgive my reminding you that this afternoon scarcely seemed the chosen time for intellectual companionship. You remember I put you to sleep with my play."

In spite of the laugh with which he ended, there lurked in Bradley's voice a hint of offense as he said the words.

"It was horrid of me," confessed Theodosia handsomely.

She pressed close to him again, and, regardless of the possible eyewitnesses of whom she had been so fearful a few minutes before, she slipped her hand into his, and they swung along the road down to the yellow house and the excellent waiting meal. It was served as usual, with innuendoes, none too veiled, from grandma, to the effect that she would like to know how soon Miss Wendell proposed to evacuate her lodgings.

That night, in his grandfather's bed-chamber, Bradley reviewed the situation in what he conceived to be a very thorough and philosophic manner. His pulses still tingled agreeably from the fervor of Theodosia's good night; but he had learned during the past week that tingling pulses alone had not sufficient power to obscure his understanding. No matter how warmly she had told him good night, there remained the damning fact that she had fallen asleep while he had been talking about his work, while he had been advancing his most cherished theories of art.

There was no question about it—she was a spoiled and selfish young beauty. Charm had helped to spoil her; she had quantities of it—it was not wonderful that the world succumbed to it. Beauty had helped to spoil her; beauty almost always spoiled women, except women like Madeline. He would say for Madeline that whatever faults of temper and disposition she displayed, she had not those of the spoiled beauty. And how beautiful she was—in a plain, satisfying sort of way!

But he was not devoting this hour to thoughts of Madeline; he was devoting it to thoughts of Theodosia. To Theodosia, who was spoiled, but who was, nevertheless, very dear and desirable;

pretty, talented, gay. And doubtless marriage would tend to make her unselfish. Once she really belonged to a man, once his career had become, so to speak, her own career, it must be that she would be completely interested in it. Yes, what Theodosia needed was marriage. Having found her somewhat unsatisfactory as a sweetheart, he concluded, with great sapience, that as a wife she would reveal none of the qualities that had disturbed him.

Of course, once they were married, he must really pay more attention to *her* literary ambitions. But it was absurd and unreasonable of her to expect him, when he was in the very throes of a new idea, to listen to all those dreary yards of verse. Why did people write verse, anyway? There had been enough of it written already. For his part, he felt the world could get on quite comfortably for a century or two without a single new poet, even a good poet.

Playwriting, of course, was different. The Elizabethans and the eighteenth-century men had left a very respectable volume of drama to the race, to be sure; but it was the essence of drama to reproduce eternal verities in the picture of particular ages, particular moments of time. A hiatus of a century or two in playwrights could never be allowed.

Yes, the thing to do was to persuade Theodosia to marry him at once. Every one admitted that an engagement represented a trying period in the life of young men and women. It was upsetting, disorganizing. Marriage would change all that. He would talk to Theodosia about it to-morrow. Of course, they would be terribly hard up for a while; still, he supposed he could sell off this estate. Hang it, he should hate to do it! Yet he might have to. Anyway, he could rake and scrape enough together for them to picnic on it for a year. And by that time "The Healing of the Hills" would be on the boards,

and his royalties would be enormous and— How pretty Theodosia would look in the author's box on the night when the play was first produced! How her lovely face would shine! How her exquisite little figure would set off the exquisite little costume she would wear! Theodosia had a sure taste in dress.

Poor Madeline!

The next afternoon proved no less golden and glorious than most of those that had marked their courtship. According to their regular schedule since they had been engaged, they did not meet until after luncheon. Bradley breakfasted with the Dowds at what Theodosia was pleased to consider an unearthly hour, and she breakfasted later in her room. He shared the noon-day meal of the old people, and then, about two o'clock, he and she set forth upon their rambles. Usually each had come with pockets stuffed with manuscript. To-day, Bradley left his at home. Yesterday's lesson had not been lost upon him. Theodosia—being a spoiled beauty—would not be truly and intelligently and unselfishly interested in his work until it represented her career, also. Well, let that time be brought swiftly on!

They climbed again to the top of Sunset Mountain.

"I wonder," said Theodosia to him, as they swung up the winding road, "if you and I wouldn't have fallen just as much in love with any other woman and any other man who happened to be here this fall? You see for yourself that it's weather and scenery that absolutely demand love as part of the setting."

"Well," answered Bradley handsomely, "I'm glad I happen to be the man and you happen to be the woman. Because I flatter myself that when the weather and scenery both change, there will still be something left of our romance. I think I shall be able to make your eyes shine and your cheeks redden

even when I have no October wind to help me. Don't you?"

At his glance, both the desirable phenomena that he had mentioned promptly took place.

"Yes, I do think so," declared Theodosia with conviction.

"I'm glad you do, for that makes it easier for me to persuade you to do something that I think wise and perfectly feasible. Why don't we get married at once, Theo?"

"At once!" Her astonishment was genuine.

"You didn't imagine, did you, that I was going to be kept dangling like that other poor fellow?" said Bradley masterfully. "No, my lady, you've taught me a lesson by your treatment of him. Oh, don't try to make a pair of swords of your pretty eyes—you can't slay me with all those sharp glances. Come, let's get married before we are bored with each other! Let's have all our boredom where it properly belongs—after we've been married some seventeen or twenty-seven years. Will you?"

The idea evidently appealed to the spirit of adventure in the young woman. Visibly she coquetted with it. She surveyed it with her head on one side. Color mounted in her cheeks, lights danced in her eyes, as she viewed it.

"How soon do you mean?" she demanded finally.

"I mean to-day or to-morrow," stated Bradley, matter-of-factly.

Theodosia gave a little exclamation of dismay, but even in that there sounded a note of pleasurable excitement.

"You mean without going home? You mean without a real wedding? No trousseau? No bridesmaids? No nothing?"

"Are you game?" asked Bradley.

Theodosia considered the question a little longer.

"My people would be furious," she said. "Of course," meditatively, "it

wouldn't be the first time they have been furious with me."

"But it would be the last," Bradley pointed out. "For, you see, they will have no right ever again to be furious about anything you do; that will be my exclusive prerogative."

"It would break John's heart!" cried Theodosia. The pleasurable excitement was all gone from her voice now.

"That's been done already. It will only put him out of his misery, poor wretch. As long as you defer marrying me, that excellent and misguided young man will probably cherish the hope that you'll marry him yet. It's true kindness to him to marry me at once—the surgeon's knife and all that, you know."

"Can you see what the papers would say?" Theodosia dimpled deliciously at the thought of the paragraphs.

She proceeded to sketch a few of them. Bradley interrupted her. They had reached their summit again and were seated on the warm mosses, their backs against the great boulder.

"But will you do it? That's the question."

"Bradley, I believe I will. I think it would be a lark. And, of course"—her changing face grew suddenly grave, her bright eyes sobered and besought him for assurances—"you're sure that we love each other dearly, and that we'll never be sorry?"

"What a solemn little sweetheart it is!" Bradley caught her to him and kissed her very tenderly. He was quite convinced that he was solving every emotional difficulty that might arise in his life in advance. "I am sure, dearest, sure, sure!"

There, on the top of Sunset Mountain, they lingered, while the sun went down in a splendor of rose and gold and the early stars came out. But with the dark, some misgivings stole across the girl's bright spirit of expectation and of adventure. Bradley stopped

their expression in the accustomed way. It was arranged that the next morning they should depart at an early hour for Manchester, that they should be married, that they should make the necessary telephonic communication with her family, and that then they should come back and spend their honeymoon in McCleary's Folly itself.

"You shall never regret it, dear little girl, never, never!"

Bradley's voice was full of tenderness. His heart was also. Curiously enough he felt all the more protective toward her because of some strange, unaccountable tang of pain which the moment held for him.

Up the curving road by which the summit of Sunset Mountain was reached, their ears suddenly caught the unfamiliar sound of a horse's hoofs. But no one ever drove up the hill except an occasional picnic party, and those always came, of course, by daylight. Theodosia sat erect and listened with strained ears, while Bradley rose to his feet and went to peer over the clifflike top of the hill. Vehicles could not reach the summit.

"It is some one," he reported to Theodosia. "Some one who has a lantern swung beneath an open wagon. I can't be sure in this twilight, but it looks to me like Grandma Dowd's mare, Nellie. What on earth could bring grandma on such a jaunt—or any one else, for that matter? We'd better start down. It'll be dark by the time we get back to town, at best."

They started down the foot trail, now in sight of the swinging light in the shadows a half a mile below them, now out of sight, as the path wound around the hilltop. But finally they came up with it. It was grandma's mare, Nellie, and it was grandma herself who drove. She called to them through the gloom.

"It seemed like you were never comin' home to-night," she said harshly. "And if you want to make that Powell-

ton train, you've got to get back just as fast as you can. I put off comin' after you 's long 's I dared——"

"The Powellton train?" Bradley and Theodosia called out together. "What Powellton train?"

"The only train that goes out of Powellton at night is the Boston train, ain't it?"

"But why on earth should you want any one to take it and whom do you want to have take it?" Bewilderment rather than exasperation spoke in Bradley's voice.

"Oh, ain't I told you? Theodosia's had a telegram. She's wanted right away."

"My mother?" cried Theodosia. "My sisters?"

"No, no! Don't you worry so, child." Grandma's voice was kind again, for the first time in a month. "The telegram wasn't from your home. You're to go to Salesport as fast as you can get there. There's been an accident——"

"Salesport?" They were all in the buckboard now, and grandma had turned and was driving Nellie, lickety-split, down the mountain road. "Are you sure the telegram was for Miss Wendell?" Bradley's voice shook. He turned toward Theodosia in the darkness. "I didn't know you knew any one in Salesport. I—I know people in Salesport. I have friends there—I have old friends there."

"I didn't know I knew any one in Salesport," faltered Theodosia. "Have you got the message with you, grandma? I don't understand."

"No, I ain't got the message with me, but I can repeat it to you word for word. Now, Bradley, you put your arm around her and hold her tight, and, Theodosia, you call up all your grit now——"

"Yes, yes!" Theodosia answered through chattering teeth.

"The message came from Salesport.

It says: 'Please come as quickly as possible. There has been an accident. Doctor John Albright is seriously, but we hope not mortally, injured.' And it was signed," grandma went on vindictively, "by Madeline Penrose's pa, old Doctor Penrose."

"Oh, there was to be a convention—I remember the name of the place now! Oh, Bradley! We can telephone, can't we, before we start? An accident—what could it have been? What could it have been? Oh, my poor, dear John! My poor, poor boy!"

"Never mind, dear girl," said Bradley soothingly. "See what the telegram said—not mortally hurt. Don't you go to pieces. It's all coming out all right."

Theodosia shivered and said nothing. She did not withdraw from Bradley's arm about her shoulder, but there was nothing loverlike about the caress now; it was simply human kindness speaking to human need.

Troubles pursued them. Nellie stumbled on a rolling stone as she trotted down the steep hillside. After that she limped slowly toward the town. By the time they reached the little yellow house it was obvious that they had missed the Boston train.

"That's all right," said Bradley efficiently. "It's only a little over a hundred miles to Salesport—I've motored it before. We'll motor down, Theo. And you'll be there sooner than if you had taken the train. You won't have all that infernal changing at the junctions."

And then it developed that a late local thunderstorm had played havoc with telephone wires in the neighborhood of Salesport. They could not reach the Penrose house.

"I'm going along with you," announced Grandma Dowd firmly, after she had poured coffee down Theodosia's throat and insisted upon her eating chicken sandwiches. "I ain't goin' to

have anythin' said about this trip. Powellton's an awful place for gossip, and you two have given it plenty to talk about a'ready. I ain't goin' to have you lightin' out of town together in an automobile after dark like you're elopin'."

At the word Theodosia shuddered. She cast herself upon the old lady's bosom.

"Oh, grandma, grandma! Do come with us! Please come! Please do!"

"Ain't I just said I was goin' to?" asked grandma spiritedly.

As they whirled through the silver night, through the pine-scented woods, past marshes into which the sea reached up salty, blue fingers, through villages, through little mill towns, Bradley kept revolving in his mind the mystery of that telegram. Those two together—those two whom he and Theodosia, a week ago, in semijest, had designated for each other! Of what folly was not youth capable? He saw now that every true impulse of the girl's nature, for all her gayety, all her coquetry, all the ardors of her young blood, went out toward that John whom she had half mocked. And he found, to his amazement, that there burned in his own heart a smoldering sense of offense, of deprivation, because of this new linking of those two names—Madeline's and John Albright's.

"By Jove!" he cried aloud suddenly, at the end of a long silence. "It isn't congeniality that counts—it's difference! Theo, I've made a great discovery. A man and a woman in love with each other are only halves of a whole. They must be unlike, not like. Each must bring what the other lacks. To the rest of the world each one is an individual, is a whole, is a unit; but for each other, each is only an atom of attraction. They must be unlike, have opposite elements——"

"Yes! I'm glad you see it." The girl's voice was shaking with weariness

and eagerness. "I've been seeing it, too. There never could have been any one—oh, Bradley, I don't mean to be horrid and selfish and unkind, and you must forgive me if I hurt you—but there never could have been any one but John, and now"—she began to cry against his arm—"and now suppose there isn't any John for me any longer!"

"Don't you think it for a minute," said Bradley with conviction. "Why, Doctor Penrose——" And he proceeded to write a "Who's Who" sketch of Doctor Penrose that would have caused that gentleman, though not over-modest, to blush from sheer shame.

CHAPTER VII.

They were in the shabby drawing-room together again, Bradley and Madeline. He had just explained, with an air of casualness, how he had happened to be at Powellton, and how he had happened to be taking a walk that evening with Miss Wendell.

"Of course, there was nothing for me to do but put myself entirely at her service when she heard about your father's telegram."

"No, of course not," answered Madeline absently.

She had explained the situation—how there had been a great thunderstorm during the afternoon session of the medical convention, and how the wooden coliseum had been struck by lightning, and how it had caught fire, and how a panic had ensued, in which a great many people had been injured, and how Doctor Albright had performed prodigies of rescue before the frail platform on which he leaned had suddenly caved under with him.

"I knew that he was in love with a girl named Theodosia, but that was all I knew," said Madeline. "I told father about her when we thought—when we thought—he might never know anybody again"—her voice shook—"and he

looked among his papers and found out her whole name and address. After that—well, of course, you know all the rest. Thank Heaven that he's not going to die, that he's not even going to be a cripple for life! Oh, it would have been too cruel, too terribly cruel! Such a fine man—I never knew any one so fine—no, not even you, Bradley. And they're in love with each other, and whatever misunderstanding they may have had——"

"Yes, yes, whatever misunderstanding they may have had will be cleared up now, and they will live happy ever after," stated Bradley, with enthusiasm. "But there's another misunderstanding I am interested in. Madeline——" And then he stopped and looked at her across the lamp-lighted table.

Her face was drawn and white with the strain of the afternoon. Her eyes were full of tears, the tears of nervousness, of weakness. She didn't know how to coquet; she had no use for his silly game of hearts! Thank Heaven that she had none!

"Oh, Madeline, can you forgive me? Can you take me back?"

Some things adjust themselves without great explanation. There was never any formal breaking of the two engagements that had been contracted within ten days. They simply ceased to be. There was, of course, some little explanation of changed attitudes, of new insights, of fresh understandings.

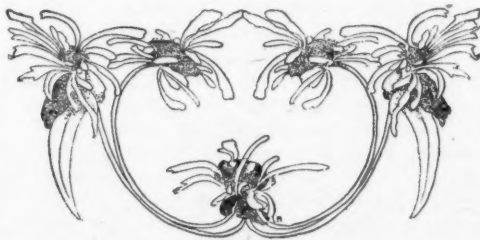
"I confess I was horribly sore when I went up to the old man's Folly, Made-

line," admitted Bradley; "sore at you—I thought you had failed me; sore at the critics—I thought they were jealous; sore at Stella Fontaine—and she *was* a cat! But I came to my senses up there in the hills. You know it's the natural instinct of the wounded animal and the wounded human to seek solitude, and there to let the mysterious processes of nature heal them of their wounds. I'm going to do a bully play on that. I've got a young inventor whose inventions go smash. And everything goes wrong—his girl goes back on him, or he thinks she does, and he is generally insane for a while, as I was. But Nature works his cure just as she did mine. I've called it—see what you think of this for a title, Madeline—'The Healing of the Hills.' Do you think it's too long a title for a play? Or too sentimental?"

"Oh, Bradley! I think it's simply sweet!" cried Madeline, with enthusiasm.

And she meant it, and on the whole she believed him. Yet in the depths of her heart there was a resolution, tinged by a little selfish regret, not to see much of the John Albrights when all things should be accomplished and all the wedding bells had rung.

Nature was undoubtedly a wonderful healer, and solitude had charms to soothe the savage beast, even as had music. Nevertheless, that girl had been part of the solitude, part of the hills, and she had broken her engagement just ten days ago!





ON CONVERSATION

By William H. Hamby

SOME people are so hard to talk to, you cannot be silent with them. An uneasy sense of duty hangs heavy, heavy over your head, that you must say something—but you can think of nothing to say. In desperation you go up into the attic of your mind and kick around in search of some ready-made remark that is not so worn and moth-eaten it will convict you of being a secondhand dealer.

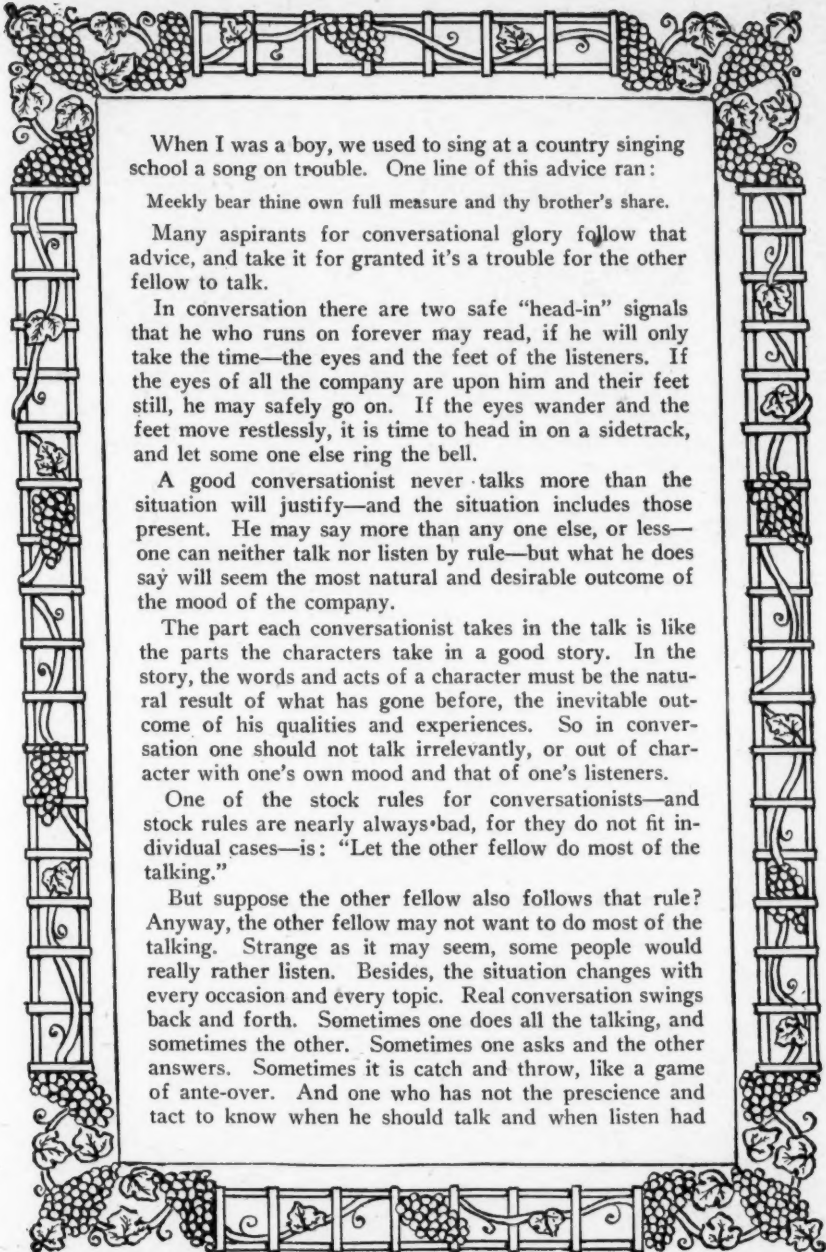
When the conversation is over, you feel as tired as a convalescent typhoid patient in a wheel chair.

Being a good conversationist means more than being a good talker, or even a good listener. One may pour out a steady and copious stream of valuable information, and still not be an interesting conversationist. Some talkers throw off facts as dry peas under a flail shed hulls. And yet watching the hulls fly is not particularly exhilarating.

Nor is it a sure proof of good conversation to make the other person think. Some of the most tiresome conversationists in the world make you think, simply scourge you to it. They fix you with an all-important earnestness in the eye, and stop every three sentences to ask you what you think of that. You have to follow their thought and think some yourself in order to be able to answer. These are the persons Gelett Burgess has dubbed "drilligators." And the most tiresome task in the world is being driven to think about what you do not want to think about. Did you ever have to learn a lesson you hated?

Real conversation makes thinking an exhilarating pleasure, talking a delightful pastime, and listening a soothing rest. One who can make such conversation is more to be prized than a travelogue, a monologue, an encyclopedia, a baby-grand piano, and a chime of silver bells combined.

But this sermon is not so much on how to find one as on how to be one.



When I was a boy, we used to sing at a country singing school a song on trouble. One line of this advice ran:

Meekly bear thine own full measure and thy brother's share.

Many aspirants for conversational glory follow that advice, and take it for granted it's a trouble for the other fellow to talk.

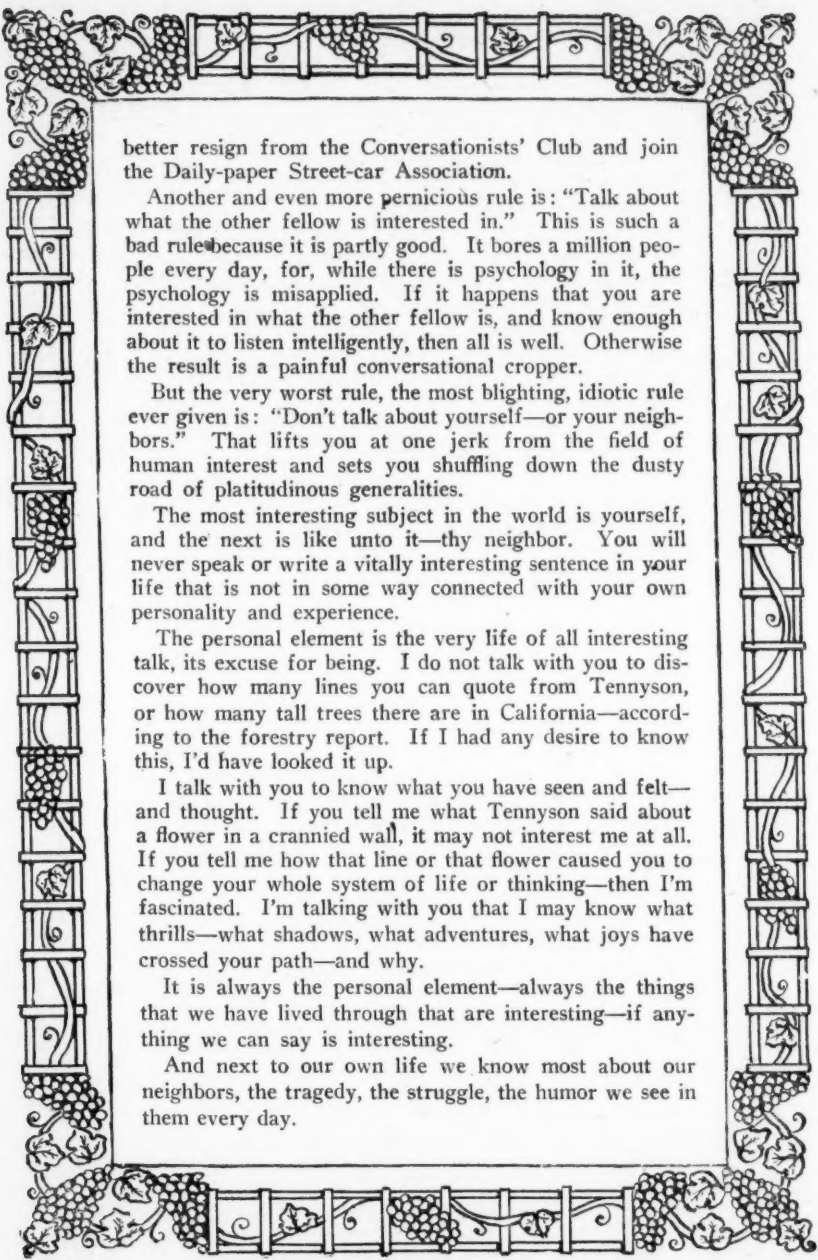
In conversation there are two safe "head-in" signals that he who runs on forever may read, if he will only take the time—the eyes and the feet of the listeners. If the eyes of all the company are upon him and their feet still, he may safely go on. If the eyes wander and the feet move restlessly, it is time to head in on a sidetrack, and let some one else ring the bell.

A good conversationist never talks more than the situation will justify—and the situation includes those present. He may say more than any one else, or less—one can neither talk nor listen by rule—but what he does say will seem the most natural and desirable outcome of the mood of the company.

The part each conversationist takes in the talk is like the parts the characters take in a good story. In the story, the words and acts of a character must be the natural result of what has gone before, the inevitable outcome of his qualities and experiences. So in conversation one should not talk irrelevantly, or out of character with one's own mood and that of one's listeners.

One of the stock rules for conversationists—and stock rules are nearly always bad, for they do not fit individual cases—is: "Let the other fellow do most of the talking."

But suppose the other fellow also follows that rule? Anyway, the other fellow may not want to do most of the talking. Strange as it may seem, some people would really rather listen. Besides, the situation changes with every occasion and every topic. Real conversation swings back and forth. Sometimes one does all the talking, and sometimes the other. Sometimes one asks and the other answers. Sometimes it is catch and throw, like a game of ante-over. And one who has not the prescience and tact to know when he should talk and when listen had



better resign from the Conversationists' Club and join the Daily-paper Street-car Association.

Another and even more pernicious rule is: "Talk about what the other fellow is interested in." This is such a bad rule because it is partly good. It bores a million people every day, for, while there is psychology in it, the psychology is misapplied. If it happens that you are interested in what the other fellow is, and know enough about it to listen intelligently, then all is well. Otherwise the result is a painful conversational cropper.

But the very worst rule, the most blighting, idiotic rule ever given is: "Don't talk about yourself—or your neighbors." That lifts you at one jerk from the field of human interest and sets you shuffling down the dusty road of platitudinous generalities.

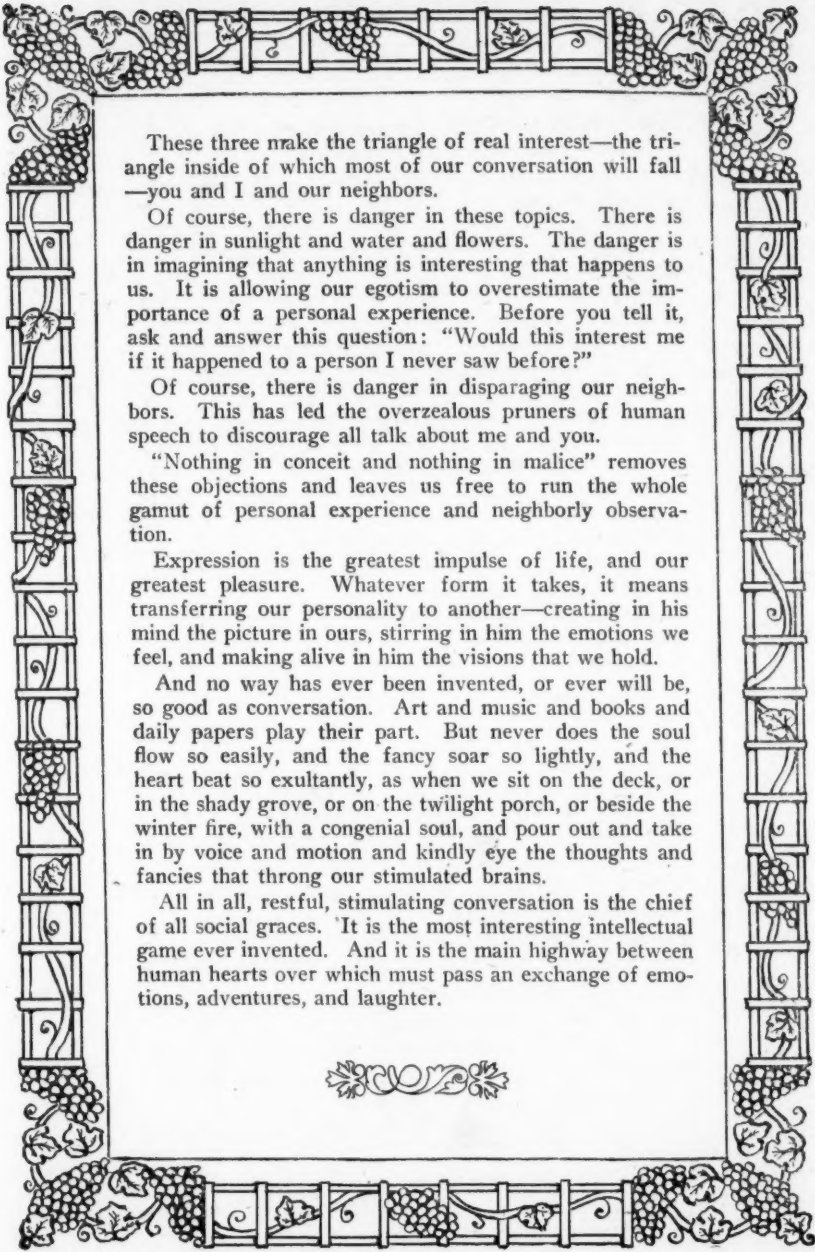
The most interesting subject in the world is yourself, and the next is like unto it—thy neighbor. You will never speak or write a vitally interesting sentence in your life that is not in some way connected with your own personality and experience.

The personal element is the very life of all interesting talk, its excuse for being. I do not talk with you to discover how many lines you can quote from Tennyson, or how many tall trees there are in California—according to the forestry report. If I had any desire to know this, I'd have looked it up.

I talk with you to know what you have seen and felt—and thought. If you tell me what Tennyson said about a flower in a crannied wall, it may not interest me at all. If you tell me how that line or that flower caused you to change your whole system of life or thinking—then I'm fascinated. I'm talking with you that I may know what thrills—what shadows, what adventures, what joys have crossed your path—and why.

It is always the personal element—always the things that we have lived through that are interesting—if anything we can say is interesting.

And next to our own life we know most about our neighbors, the tragedy, the struggle, the humor we see in them every day.



These three make the triangle of real interest—the triangle inside of which most of our conversation will fall—you and I and our neighbors.

Of course, there is danger in these topics. There is danger in sunlight and water and flowers. The danger is in imagining that anything is interesting that happens to us. It is allowing our egotism to overestimate the importance of a personal experience. Before you tell it, ask and answer this question: "Would this interest me if it happened to a person I never saw before?"

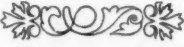
Of course, there is danger in disparaging our neighbors. This has led the overzealous pruners of human speech to discourage all talk about me and you.

"Nothing in conceit and nothing in malice" removes these objections and leaves us free to run the whole gamut of personal experience and neighborly observation.

Expression is the greatest impulse of life, and our greatest pleasure. Whatever form it takes, it means transferring our personality to another—creating in his mind the picture in ours, stirring in him the emotions we feel, and making alive in him the visions that we hold.

And no way has ever been invented, or ever will be, so good as conversation. Art and music and books and daily papers play their part. But never does the soul flow so easily, and the fancy soar so lightly, and the heart beat so exultantly, as when we sit on the deck, or in the shady grove, or on the twilight porch, or beside the winter fire, with a congenial soul, and pour out and take in by voice and motion and kindly eye the thoughts and fancies that throng our stimulated brains.

All in all, restful, stimulating conversation is the chief of all social graces. It is the most interesting intellectual game ever invented. And it is the main highway between human hearts over which must pass an exchange of emotions, adventures, and laughter.





The Reformation

by
Rufus Oliver

Author of "Analytical," "Local Color," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY H. F. NONNAMAKER

THIS is the story of a clinging vine's conscientious attempt to be a stalwart oak; and the moral of it—as far as it has any moral—is that all roads lead to Rome.

The vine's singularly inappropriate name was Judith, which a general sense of the eternal fitness of things had reduced to Juju; and as she was spending the summer with her Cousin Amy, in East Lake, and as her Cousin Amy was a very devout woman, she had just come in from "An Evening with Shakespeare," as interpreted by the Ladies' Aid Society.

From Juju's point of view, the entertainment had not been a success, and the moonlight stroll with John Feveril, who had walked home with her, had not mended matters. Not that she did not care for moonlight strolls with John Feveril, but he had made it sufficiently obvious that he attached no particular importance to moonlight strolls with her; and when he had said good night, and she stood in the hall listening to the sound of his departing footsteps, she felt curiously exhausted, as if she had been throwing her whole weight against a closed door. And she was

distressed, for it had come to her that the door would never open, and that she must never again try to force it.

Her cousin had not come in, but she found her maid waiting to help her undress. She was the only girl in East Lake who had a maid, and all the other girls envied her exceedingly, though Etta Gayle said she would hate to see the day she could not button her own shoes and run ribbon in her own "long-jeree." Etta was a plain-looking girl who was always dieting and exercising in the hope that she would wake up overnight to find herself distractingly beautiful, and she disliked Juju, partly because she envied her her pearl necklace, and her curly hair, and her freedom, chiefly because she envied her the desultory attentions of Mr. Feveril, not having the satisfaction of knowing how little they meant.

The September evening was cool, and, when the maid had left her, Juju sat on the rug before the fire and entertained herself lighting bits of kindling and holding them while they burned. But she soon gave this up, for it is not amusing to play with fire when your eyes are too wet to see the

flame. She did not admire crying. "But when you're at a funeral—" she excused herself; for that pleasant little walk in the moonlight had killed a dear hope, and she was burying it with due ceremony.

It seemed to her that she was always burying dear hopes—that she never had done anything else since she could remember. There had not been a time since she was six years old when she had not been enough in love with some man to marry him, and the fact that at twenty-four she was not even engaged spoke of tragedy all along the line.

In the beginning, her extreme youth had protected her from definite expectations, and consequently from definite disappointments; but at fourteen she had been compelled, under cross-questioning from the principal of her boarding school, to announce her "engagement" to Maurice Weinstein, of the corner grocery. And from that time on, her troubles had been legion. She had maintained, in the face of opposition, that Weinstein was a name to conjure with; that the privilege of supplying food to the hungry was one for which seraphim and cherubim might well contend; and that fourteen was an age of mature judgment and unalterable decisions.

It had been only on the intervention of her favorite teacher, a quiet woman with a sense of humor, that any settlement of the matter had been reached at all. Under her influence it had been agreed that if Juju would promise not to write to Maurice, or to see him except in the presence of a third party, until she was eighteen, she might then be engaged to him, and marry him, with the cordial consent of everybody concerned. It was not without some misgivings that the principal had agreed to this, but the little teacher, standing guard at the farewell interview, had smiled to herself—not altogether without sadness.

The following autumn, Juju had been sent to another school, and had never seen or heard of Maurice again. But that had been the least of her troubles, for she had promptly fallen in love with the head of the new school, a visionary and impractical young married man, with the face of a saint. She had adored him—she fondly imagined in secret—for the better part of two years; at the end of which time, having bankrupted the school, he had become a missionary, and Juju, after wheedling a hundred dollars out of her guardian for the heathen, had heard of him no more. He had gone to Africa, so she always thought of him as having been eaten by cannibals, and realized it was providential that he had not been free to marry her.

In reactionary juxtaposition, a *matinée* idol had risen on the missionary's ruins. After weeks of tremulous consideration of the matter, Juju had written him a letter. There had been nothing remarkable about that—dozens of other girls had done the same thing; but—miracle of miracles—she had received an answer. Something naïve and earnest about the little epistle had made its transient appeal to that world-worn spirit, and with his own beautifully manicured hand he had, considerably to his own surprise, penned in return a note of warning and admonition. It was the instinct of a gentleman that prompted that reply, and Juju had recognized and honored it as such; but its paternalism had been too much for her sense of romance. She had no longer slept with his picture under her pillow; she had given it, instead, to the maid, who had promised to cherish it, but who had promptly encircled with its German-silver frame the stolid countenance of a man who was in her eyes far more worthy of the honor. *Sic transit gloria mundi.*

The year that she had left school, Juju had been ill, and had spent some



But she soon gave this up, for it is not amusing to play with fire when your eyes are too wet to see the flame.

time in a hospital. There had been a young staff surgeon, with black hair and blue eyes—— It still hurt her to think of him. She had never known, and never was to know, that, according to his lights, he had loved her. He was a man of cool judgment and iron will, and, having once decided that the little soft, vivid creature in No. 36 would be, as wife to the career he had mapped out for himself, a martyr from her own standpoint and a hindrance from his, he had put the idea definitely from him.

Juju knew nothing of the mental processes by which this had come to pass. She only knew that he was accustomed to linger beside her bed; that when the times were out of joint with him, she, and only she, could coax a smile to his lips; that his hand had sometimes rested on her tumbled curls with a furtive tenderness; and that, suddenly, inexplicably, a veil had dropped between them. She thought, after the immemorial way of women, that it was something she had said or done—that unwittingly she had failed.

him, disappointed him, chilled him; and she had thrown pride to the winds in her efforts to set things right. They had been perfectly unavailing, and if she had taken from the hospital a mended and convalescent body, she had carried with her also a spirit wounded and humiliated almost past endurance.

In this state of mind, she had thrown herself into the first sheltering arms that offered themselves. They had happened to belong to a prominent lawyer, a good deal her senior, whom she had met at a summer resort, and they had comforted her for a while, only to leave a larger gap when they had been taken away; for taken away they had been. There was real tragedy there—he had been injured in a railroad wreck the day after the engagement had been announced, and had died.

It had all been very sad. The young minister had gone often to see her, and had talked with tenderness and simplicity about the strange dispensations of Providence and submission to the Divine will. She had fallen in love with him, and he with her, before he had got up the courage to tell her that he was engaged to a girl in his home town. Juju knew, and he knew that she knew, and she knew that he knew that she knew, that if she had lifted a finger, he would have wriggled out of his engagement by hook or by crook; but she had not lifted it, and he had married the other girl.

Looking back on that particular episode, she had no regrets. She thought that she had behaved wonderfully well; and then, too, as time passed she came to feel of him, as of all the others, that for her to have married him would have been a mistake. This had begun to dawn upon her about the time she had met John Feveril.

And now that budding dream must go to join the others! She looked back on the long procession of them with loathing. She did not know that she

was a vine, and that vines must cling; she thought she was a monstrosity, and as she crouched over the dying fire, she hated herself, and was all for shattering the sorry scheme of things to bits and remolding it, if not nearer to the heart's desire, at least into something radically different from its present form.

When Mr. Feveril heard that Juju had bought Wistaria Cottage, and was going to remodel it for a summer home, he groaned humorously. He was an architect, and he was a young man of some intelligence, and he foresaw that he would shortly be called on to plan a way of remodeling Wistaria Cottage. He did not want to remodel it. No man ever yet thought hard of a girl for loving him, Mr. Feveril no more than another; but he was so handsome that he was used to being adored—he had even gotten to the point where it bored him—and for that reason, and no other, he had nobly and magnanimously decided that for Juju's own good he would see as little of her as possible forevermore. But such is the never-too-much-to-be-admired consistency of man that he was distinctly annoyed when she quietly departed for the city, presumably there to perfect her plans without his assistance. To avoid a woman, for her own good or otherwise, is one thing, and to find yourself avoided by her is another.

It was a gay and adventurous Juju who got on the train, in the handsomest blue broadcloth suit that any one in East Lake had ever dared expose to the contamination of a railroad journey—though, as Etta Gayle pointed out, she could afford it, and people of her type were entirely dependent on clothes for their looks. It was a gay and adventurous Juju who got off that same train, in that same plutocratic suit, ten days later. But she had gone away an heiress; she came back—a pauper.

Or, if not quite that, approximately so. Nobody seemed to know anything very definite about it; but gradually the picture of Juju scrubbing floors, Juju selling matches on the street, Juju gnawing crusts in a garret, faded from the public mind, to be replaced by the actual and visible sight of Juju living in Wistaria Cottage, unimproved, with an old scarecrow of a poor relation, dug up from Heaven knows where, as housekeeper and companion.



"I don't know—it's fun working with your hands," murmured Juju. "And if you use rose water and glycerin, they don't look so bad——"

Most of East Lake's four hundred went to call on her when she was formally installed in her new home; Mr. Feveril with the rest. Perhaps he thought that a girl face to face with utter destitution would have other things to think of than himself; perhaps he thought she needed present comfort more than she did future peace of mind.

Juju was mounted on a stepladder, hanging curtains, when he came, and as she had sent the servant out to buy four nails about two inches long, with round bodies and little, skimpy heads, she climbed down from her perch and admitted him herself, but promptly climbed back again and resumed her work. She did not do this altogether without shame, realizing that it was weak-minded in one who had renounced Mr. Feveril and all his works—the sole reason for such a display of industry being that the curtains were green and her dress was rose-colored, and she knew that the combination made her look like a great, gay flower or a tropical bird.

To atone for her backsliding, she began to talk to him, with severity, about the weather. It had been bad, and one would have gathered from her manner that, while she was too polite to say so, she well knew who was at the bottom of it. From the weather, they progressed to the charm of open fires, and from that began—hypocritically—to enthuse over the relative ease and economy of heating small rooms, and so came by easy stages to the changed conditions of her life. She did not seem to know much more about her financial losses than anybody else did.

Some of her investments, she explained vaguely, had just stopped paying all of a sudden.

"Who handled your money for you," he asked.

"Judge Stone," she answered abstractedly, busy with the curtains. Did one, or did one not, put the wisest hem at the top?

"Judge Stone?" he repeated.

"Of course," she said. "Why not? He has always looked after all I had. It must have been a lot of trouble to him, and I suppose he's glad he won't have to bother with it any more. I should be."

"You seem to take your losses very calmly," he remarked.

"What's the use of not?" she said cheerfully. "I have enough left to live on, and Jean-Christophe says that anybody who has more than enough to live on is a monster."

He received this statement with unconcealed disfavor.

"It ought to be so you could jail people for publishing such things," he said. "The world is full of fools who believe that if you see a thing in print, it's so."

A tentative wonder if he included her among the fools mentioned brought the blood to her face.

"Well, I don't see the use of having books if you're not going to put anything in them but what everybody believes already," she said, with unprecedented spirit; and in her newly acquired haughtiness cast about for something yet more crushing. But as his only answer was an indulgent smile, she said, after a pause, reverting to the original subject, that she hoped nobody would feel sorry for her on account of her losses, or think that she was sorry for herself. She was perfectly happy.

"But you will have to give up a great many things that you are accustomed to," he argued, apparently anxious to

convince her that if she was not miserable, she ought to be.

"Well, I'll have to do that when I die—I might as well be getting used to it," she said philosophically. "And I can't afford to gad about the country now, so I can make a home here. You can't make a home unless you live in it most of the time. I shall have a kitten, and a garden, and I think, maybe, after a while, I'm going to adopt an orphan."

"An orphan? Good Lord!" exclaimed Mr. Feveril. He could hardly have seemed more thunderstruck if she had said she was going to adopt a buzzard.

"Don't you—*like* orphans?" faltered Juju, suddenly and acutely conscious of being one herself. Of course she was—different. That is, she had money—or she *had* had money—and culture, of a sort; but it was no thanks to any innate quality of her own. As far as she, personally, was concerned, she had started life plain orphan.

"I've no objection to them in their place," Mr. Feveril conceded.

"Their place?"

"Orphan asylums. That's what they're for. But who ever heard of a young girl adopting one?"

"Emerson says, to be a man, one must be a nonconformist."

She had not known that of herself. Mr. Pete Carter, who had sold her Wistaria Cottage, had quoted it to her, and she had seized upon it with avidity, foreseeing that it would be useful to her in the face of her Cousin Amy's inevitable attitude toward the nonconformity which she intended to be for some time a conspicuous part of her life.

"You don't have to be a man," observed Mr. Feveril.

It was exactly what Amy had said. Nobody seemed disposed to help her or encourage her, or even to let her alone. They all held up their hands at

her, and, when she tried to explain, made little senseless quibbles like that.

"No," she said dispassionately, "I don't. But if you have to be a non-conformist to be a man, you have to be an anarchist to be a woman—they have so much more to contend with."

He saw that she was annoyed, and said pacifically:

"Well, all anybody asks of you is that you keep on being your perfect self."

She could not repress a fleeting thought that she had been her perfect self for quite a while without making any visible inroads on his affection—not that she any longer admitted to herself that his affection was any sort of goal toward which to strive. Time was when she would have hung around the subject of her perfection like a bee around a honey pot, but that time—she fondly believed—had passed. Mindful that the least sign of lingering, the lightest banter, might point the way to pitfalls and destruction, she said warily and impersonally:

"Well, the orphan isn't an immediate problem—my hands are full for the present without that. There's the garden. Mr. Pete Carter says you can start a garden in the fall just as well as in the spring, so I started mine yesterday. The gardening book says, 'All beds must positively be dug out to a depth of two feet,' so I didn't get very far; but I started."

"Before I'd be dictated to by a gardening book!" said Mr. Feveril. And then, paternally, "Look here, Juju, you mustn't do that sort of thing—it's too hard for you."

She acquiesced with unexpected readiness.

"Yes, I know. Mr. Pete Carter said it was."

"I'll be glad to help you, if you like," volunteered Mr. Feveril astoundingly.

But Juju could, on occasion, out-Herod Herod.

"That's awfully good of you," she

said, "but Mr. Pete Carter's going to spade the rest for me, and, after he's done that, then I'm going to do everything else by myself. He said that planting things in your own ground with your own hands is one of the highest forms of happiness, and he wouldn't even try to deprive me of it."

"Huh! Sounds like Pete Carter!"

Juju wrinkled her nose at him reflectively. She caught the disparagement in his tone, and yet she could not deny that it *did* sound like Pete Carter.

"Manual labor is manual labor," said Mr. Feveril, equally indisputably, "and as for comparing it with brainwork as a source of the higher satisfactions of life—that is absurd."

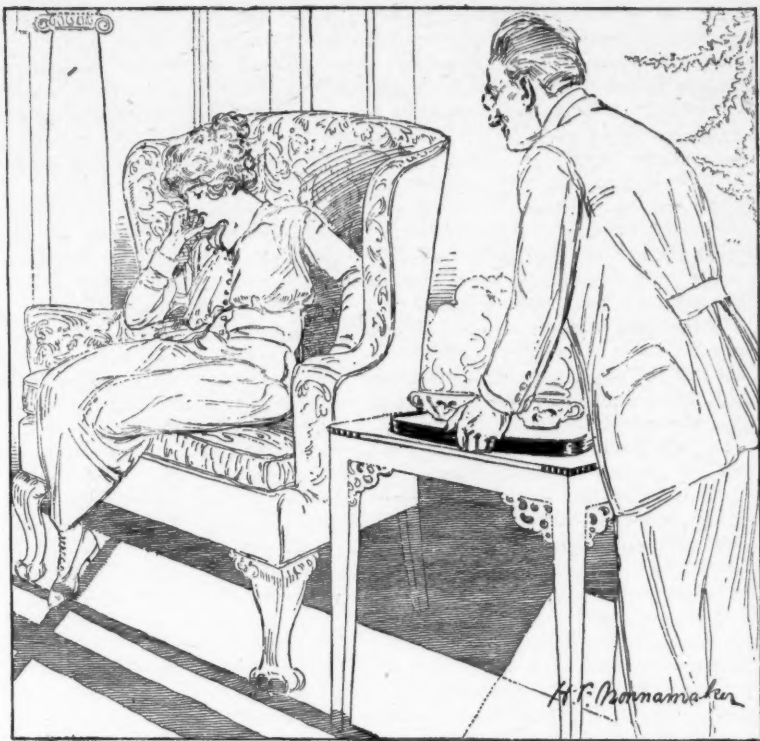
"I don't know—it's fun working with your hands," murmured Juju, feeling her inability to argue with him. "And if you use rose water and glycerin, they don't look *so* bad—"

She held hers up for him to see, slim and childish, and not wholly unscathed from her recent activities.

"This," she said, touching a red scar on the smooth, white skin, "is where I made the fire this morning. And this was the can opener, and the tack hammer made that."

It was evident that her wounds gave her the profoundest satisfaction; so much so that Mr. Feveril gave a snort of amusement as he looked at her. But even to his blunted perceptions there was something touching in the aspect of the little figure on the stepladder, stopping in the midst of what he regarded as calamity unspeakable to admire the scars of battle.

Her bright unconsciousness of pathos disarmed him still further, and, rising, he took both her hands in his. It was Mr. Feveril's most dangerous trait, and perhaps his most endearing one, that he followed his impulses, good, bad, or indifferent, with no thought of the ultimate consequences to himself or anybody else.



"Who but you," she said accusingly, "would have taken my supper bread to make sandwiches of?"

"Soft little lady hands!" he said, kissing first one and then the other. "Don't spoil them, *fiorella*."

She had told him once that an Italian used to call her *fiorella*—little flower—but she thought he had forgotten. His tenderness might have been more effective if he had, for the name served the purpose of recalling to her mind that same Italian—and the perfidy of man.

"I wasn't *hinting*," she said majestically, withdrawing her hands to clutch at the stepladder, which had a disconcerting way of wabbling at psychological moments.

"You are adorable," he said.

But he made no effort to regain her hands. His sentimental impulse was already on the wane, and, besides, he knew how true it is of girls, as of sheep, that you have only to leave them alone and they'll come home.

When he had gone, Juju, surreptitiously gazing after him from behind one of the newly hung curtains, lived over that golden moment in an ecstasy of soft abandonment. Perhaps, after all— She had almost, in that tense interval before she withdrew her hands from his, yielded herself utterly to the spell of his tenderness; she had all but

leaned over and touched with her lips the little dark ringlet that escaped from his close-cut hair and clung so lovingly to his white forehead. But she had not done so! Fortified by the recollection of her amazing will power, as thus displayed, she came sharply back to earth.

"Beauty is vain, and favor deceitful," she said sadly, leaning her head against the window frame.

She even added, acidly apostrophizing Mr. Feveril's vanishing back:

"I don't know that I think you *are* beautiful. I don't know but what I think you're plain skinny!"

She had no intention of being inveigled into any recrudescence dream. She was determined that, of the structure of romance she had built up around him, not one stone should be left standing upon another.

For two months, Juju, flitting industriously about Wistaria Cottage with trowel and broom, brass polish and clean linen, played at poverty, and found it charming. She wore little fancy aprons, like a stage parlor maid; and she learned that if you leave things in disorder at night, it is not only possible, but highly probable, that you will find them in disorder the next morning—and that it is an error of judgment to dust a room just before sweeping it—and that nothing but the grace of God will keep cream-of-tomato soup from curdling when you add the milk to the tomatoes.

But early in January the poor relation, full of dismay over the trouble she was causing, took to her bed, and there was no one but Juju to nurse her, no one but Juju to direct the one incompetent servant, no one but Juju to decide what must be had at any cost, and what, at any cost, must be done without. Those were parlous times, and, as Mr. Pete Carter pointed out to her, went to show that very deserving peo-

ple sometimes find themselves in a peck of trouble.

Theoretically, nursing is a touching and picturesque occupation, but there is more to it than smoothing a grateful patient's pillow and administering amber jelly with a silver spoon. Juju found it so. The days she felt able, in a measure, to cope with, but the nights were, as she cordially assured herself, "the limit." For three weeks she slept on a cot in her patient's room, getting up every two hours to give medicine and see about the fire—for the poor relation had an old-fashioned, but none the less sincere, objection to fresh air, and the only way Juju could induce her to sleep with her window open was to agree to keep the fire going all night. It ran up her fuel bill, and this worried her, for she had spent a disproportionate part of her income on Christmas presents, and had promised herself to retrench in January; instead of which she was every day going deeper into the hole.

Mr. Pete Carter came in one afternoon when things were at a very low ebb, and found her eating sugar out of a saucer with a spoon, because she had once read somewhere that in cases of exhaustion, sugar was a quickly assimilated source of energy.

Worn out as she was, it never occurred to her to mind Pete, or to spruce up for company on his appearance. She sat huddled in the corner of a chintz-covered armchair, frankly out of sorts, watching him wriggle out of his overcoat. He was a slender, brown young man, with bristly hair and spectacles—not particularly imposing, yet the room seemed full of him.

"Great gobs of wet water are falling," he announced cheerfully.

She said nothing. She reflected that her last caller, who had just departed, would undoubtedly get his new hat ruined, and that she was glad of it.

Apparently oblivious to her mood,

Mr. Pete Carter put some wood on the fire, which was dying down, and demanded coffee. Tea he despised, but he came in sometimes at the tea hour and asked for coffee instead.

"I don't want any coffee," said Juju fretfully, suspicious that he was trying to cheer her up.

"Dost thou think because thou art virtuous, there shall be no more cakes and ale?"

"Not because I am virtuous. Because it's Lizzie's day off, and I don't know how the percolater works."

"Oh, if that's all! You put coffee in the top, water in the bottom, set it on the stove, and let it perk."

Undaunted by her lack of enthusiasm, he disappeared kitchenward, and she told herself that she would follow him directly; but minute after minute slipped by, and she still sat looking into the fire, brooding.

Mr. Pete Carter presently returned, bearing a tray which he set down on a small table at her elbow, and she glanced over its contents with a reluctant interest. Suddenly she sat bolt upright.

"Who but you," she said accusingly, "would have taken my supper bread to make sandwiches of?"

"Who, indeed?" said Mr. Pete Carter, with unconcealed pride. "Now, then, Elijah, will you pour the coffee, or does that, too, devolve upon the raven?"

"It looks as if I might do that much," admitted Juju, reaching for the percolater.

"Appearances are deceitful," he said, forestalling her. "I didn't bring but one spoon. I thought you could use that one you were licking when I came in, and then there'll be that much less for me to wash. Housekeeping wouldn't be half the trouble it is if people would only use their brains a little."

She laughed in spite of herself.

"That's right," said Mr. Pete Carter. "Cheer up, and set the average of the world's happiness rising."

"The world's happiness," repeated Juju, looking like anything but an exponent of it. "Do you believe in it, Pete?"

"Umph-umph. Don't you?"

"How do I know what I believe? I've just been quarreling with John Feveril about it."

"Oh, you have?" he said. His tone was noncommittal, but an expression of enlightenment flitted across his features.

"Yes. He—he wanted me to have Judge Stone—investigated."

"What for?"

"For trying to make the world a little happier—that's what I told you. He gave some money to the Children's Home. I don't think that's anything to *investigate* a man for—do you?"

"My dear!" said Mr. Pete Carter impersonally.

"Well," she amended reluctantly, "he said people had no right to make the world happier with other people's money."

"Narrow-minded cuss!"

"Oh, you make me tired!" she said, stirring her coffee furiously.

"The case as it stands," he observed unresentfully, "seems to be that Mr. Feveril has implied that Judge Stone has presented the Children's Home with somebody else's money. Your money?"

"Yes."

"He must have had some reason for making such a statement?"

"He thought he had."

"Do not drive me to thumbscrews and the rack," said Mr. Pete Carter. "Proceed."

"It wasn't anything—much. He'd found out that some railroad stock and things that belonged to me had been transferred to Judge Stone, and that Judge Stone had lately given some money to the Children's Home—

anonymously. I don't see what business it was of John Feveril's, do you? I should think, when you give a thing anonymously, anybody would know that meant that you wanted to be let alone about it, wouldn't you?"

"I gather that you did not favor an investigation," he said, after a silence, "and I suppose you had *your* reasons for that."

"Well," said Juju, "it *was* my money, you know. Not that Judge Stone gave it to them. I gave it to them. He didn't want me to, but he couldn't prevent it, so he agreed to help me keep it a secret. I thought it was—kind of nice in me to give away all my money, like that. But John Feveril thought it was—silly."

"Did he?"

"Yes; he said so. He said that I had as much right to be happy as anybody else, and that it didn't help the world any for me to give my happiness away and me be miserable."

"Are you miserable?"

"Right this minute, I am."

He was silent for so long that she began to wriggle nervously about in her chair, and when he still did not notice her, she ostentatiously dropped her spoon. Stooping to pick it up, he smiled to himself over the childishness of the maneuver.

"It would seem to be Mr. Feveril's idea that the world's happiness—which he seems to have confused with its cash—is limited; that in proportion to the amount of it any one person can corner, some one else must do without. What a very—curious—way to look at it."

She said nothing, and after a moment he went on, leaning forward with his hands clasped between his knees.

"Now, to me, happiness is like nitrogen. Do you know what nitrogen is?"

"It's got something to do with peas," said Juju unexpectedly.

"Exactly. It's an essential element in the growth and development of plants, just as I believe that a certain amount of happiness is essential to the right development of the human soul. The air is full of nitrogen—there's simply no limit to it; and some plants—your peas, for one—gather it from the atmosphere and make it available for use. I believe that the universe is full of loose happiness, so to speak, and that some people, like nitrogenous plants, draw it down to earth and put it into circulation. And the more there is in circulation, of course, the greater your chance, and mine, and everybody's, of receiving a satisfactory *pro rata*."

"You mean I'm a nice, useful corn-field pea," said Juju dejectedly. "But you mean it for a compliment, I know, so thank you just the same."

"People used to say that you and John Feveril were going to be married," observed Mr. Pete Carter irrelevantly, staring into the fire.

"Did they?"

"Yes."

"Oh!"

"I ought not have said that. Excuse me, will you?"

"That was all right—I didn't mind. I never mind anything you say, Pete. I was just thinking—"

She balanced the recovered spoon precariously on one finger tip, while he waited with such patience as he might for her to go on.

"I was just thinking," she said, "what a pity somebody didn't tell me that when it would have done me some good. It would have thrilled me, last summer. I spent all August wondering whether I was going to marry him or not. It all depended on whether he asked me."

"Juju!" he exclaimed.

She paid no attention to the pain in his voice—was unaware of it.

"What's the use of being shocked?" she said. "It's so."

"That doesn't make it any easier," he said constrainedly.

She looked at him inquiringly.

"Easier? For me?" she said. "Oh, I don't mind any more! They do say eels get used to being skinned, you know."

"Let us hope so," said Mr. Pete Carter.

"I could marry him now, if I wanted to," she said, momentarily cheered by the thought. "I don't think he knows it exactly, but I think he *suspected* it, a while ago. But I don't care anything about it now."

"Don't!" he protested.

"Well, didn't I just say I wasn't?" she answered, relapsing into gloom. "I'm never going to marry anybody. I'm going to be a darned old maid and rub people's backs with liniment, and never have time to wash my hair or put rosaline on my finger nails."

He glanced instinctively at her hands, very white and soft, and undisguisedly coral-hued about the nails. She concealed them hastily under her rose-colored shawl.

"I'm an emancipated being, Pete Carter," she said, with sudden spirit. "I used to be always looking forward to getting married, and never planning for anything else, and never caring about anything else; and every man



The clinging vine, with a sigh of ineffable satisfaction, had reverted to type.

I met was a possibility—or an impossibility. And I—I got so tired of it! Sick and tired of it, Pete Carter. So I'm going to be an old maid, much as I shall despise it. I tried my fortune in the hymn book the last time I went to church, and it said I was. I opened it at random, and the first thing my eye lit on was:

"Who is he, then, whose scorn I dread?
Whose wrath or hate makes me afraid?
A man! An heir to death! A slave
To sin! A bubble on the wave!

So I knew by that the Lord didn't want

me to think highly enough of men to marry one."

"It's a sad world," said Pete.

The early winter twilight, earlier and deeper than usual on account of the clouds, had crept upon them as they talked, and the room was in darkness but for the red glow from the hearth. Mr. Pete Carter, intent upon his own thoughts, stared unseeing into the ruby depths. Juju, nervously plaiting and unplaiting a fold of her shawl, contemplated with an ever-waning enthusiasm the dismal prospect of living and dying a darned old maid.

"Pete," she said, after some time, pressing her fingers tightly together, "do you think I'm—fast?"

"Did *he* say you were fast?" demanded Pete, with a sudden, volcanic coming to life.

"Oh, no," she said, shrinking away from the light. "I—just wondered."

"If he said anything like that to you!" he insisted, clenching an experimental fist.

"Well, if he had, I should have eaten him alive," said Juju, with ladylike restraint. "So you needn't worry. But he didn't."

"But why——"

"Nothing. I just asked."

He was not satisfied.

"Juju," he said, "something happened, to put that into your head. What was it?"

"Nothing," she said faintly.

"Yes, it was. Can't you tell Pete, honey?"

His tenderness reduced her almost to tears. Her voice shook as she answered him:

"I—I wanted to do something that you might think—was fast. I didn't know. I'm *not* fast; I'm just—tired.

And I wondered if you'd mind—if I——"

"What?" he said, scarcely above a whisper.

"Oh, it was nothing," she said, with a piteous attempt at a smile.

He looked at her without making any answer, waiting.

"I thought—if you didn't mind my holding your hand—just for a little while——"

It was the most perfect compliment that Pete Carter had ever had paid him, and he knew it. Not for the half of his kingdom would he have failed to be worthy of it. He could not, perhaps, quite hide the shining of his face, but his voice, when he spoke, was unemotional.

"Why, certainly," he said, much as he would have said it if she had asked him to mail a letter, or to close the door. He would have risen from his chair, but she stopped him with a fluttering gesture.

"I am coming to you," she said; and, after a time, half crying and half laughing, she came.

"I didn't know—I was such a—baby," she apologized humbly, sinking on the cushion she had thrown down at his feet.

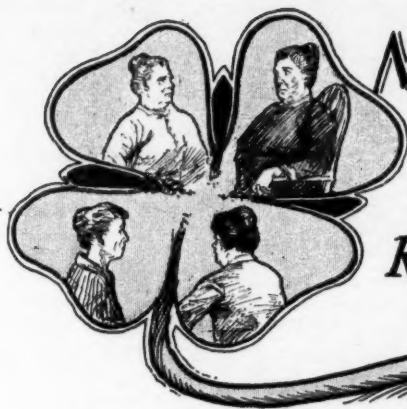
Without a word he laid his hand, palm upward, on the arm of his chair, and after one breathless moment hers, strangely confident and unafraid, crept into it.

"Comfortable?" said Pete matter-of-factly.

"Oh, yes," she said, and brushed his rough sleeve lightly with her cheek.

The clinging vine, with a sigh of ineffable satisfaction, had reverted to type.





MRS. BRIGHT AND THE BIG FOUR By *Ralph Bergengren*

Author of "The Mothers' Meeting in the Lucullus," "The Demon and Miss Brook," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY CLARENCE ROWE

ON the back of Mrs. Trescott's plump neck a mosquito had settled, planting its little feet firmly and preparing to bore deep into that tempting surface. Mrs. Paxet, a younger matron, perching behind her friend on the piazza rail of the Mattekeeset Yacht Club, watched the mosquito and wondered how far it would go before it was found out. Mrs. Trescott, unaware of her parasite, continued in voluble, indignant conversation with four other girlishly dressed matrons, whose wicker chairs fronted her. They talked all together, singly, and in couples—a lively conversation in which a gentleman at a moderate distance might have distinguished the names of Timilty, Regan, Murphy, and Smith, scrub women by occupation, and commonly known to the summer colony of Mattekeeset as the "Big Four."

There are, undoubtedly, many subjects of conversation more vitally important than scrub women; but at this afternoon hour, in the very beginning of the season, scrub women engrossed these ladies to the exclusion of politics,

war, weather, love, literature, the drama, or even dress. It was remarkable to hear how much they found to say about scrub women. Dozens, and, perhaps, hundreds, of these humble toilers were mentioned with intimate observation; a rich anecdotalage of scrub women revealed itself; and the fact every now and then came to the surface, like a tired swimmer in a wild sea of words, that Mrs. Timilty, a native scrub woman of Mattekeeset, would no longer scrub for less than thirty-five cents an hour. And neither would Mrs. Regan, Mrs. Murphy, or Mrs. Smith. And last season they had scrubbed for thirty. And that had been bad enough. And when mother was a girl, you were able to hire help who did everything, scrubbing and all, for three dollars a week. And Mr. Smith ought to be ashamed of himself for allowing Mrs. Smith to support him.

"It's outrageous!" said Mrs. Paxet, with her eye on the mosquito. "Thirty-five cents! But I don't see what we're going to do about it."

"We're in their power," said Mrs.



They talked all together, singly, and in couples. It was remarkable to hear how much they found to say about scrub women.

Trescott. "We're a subject people, and there's nothing for us but to bend our necks to the heel. I'd like to know who was the *first* woman to pay Timilty thirty-five!"

Her voice indicated that something serious would happen to that woman; and her eyes, which seemed to say that boiling in oil would be too light and cheerful a punishment, traveled searchingly from one to another of the faces in front of her. They all bore her scrutiny, although, as a matter of fact, Mrs. Burton had done it.

"We had a scrub woman once who had only one eye," said Mrs. Parker impressively. "And she used to scrub right round and round in a circle."

"I had a perfect dear in town last winter," put in Mrs. Burton. "A Mrs.

Bright. She came in and did nearly all the scrubbing for the Queen Henrietta Maria, and she only charged twenty cents. A widow with three children. She wanted to come with us for the summer, but, of course, she weighs too much for a dining room——"

This raised the important question why are scrub women always fat. And why do they always have young children?

"A fat woman in the dining room," said Mrs. Jenks eagerly, "I can not stand. And neither can Mr. Jenks. Just suppose she should trip and fall down!"

"The worst of it," confided Mrs. Parker, reverting to her one-eyed phenomenon, "was the corners. She never did the corners at all."

"Mrs. Bright was really quite pathetic about it," said Mrs. Burton to Mrs. Trescott. "She seemed to think that working in the sweet, green country, as she called it, would be a vacation."

"My dear," said Mrs. Trescott, "these four *creatures*—Timilty, Regan, Murphy, and Smith—have a monopoly. If we could get your Mrs. Bright here for the summer——"

Mrs. Trescott slapped herself on the neck.

"Now you've frightened him away, Amy," said Mrs. Paxet, from her perch on the railing. "And he was having *such* a good time."

"Five women to do the work of four women," continued Mrs. Trescott, scratching her neck, "would bring down the price. It's a law of economics. It always happens when the supply is greater than the demand."

"But where would she live?" asked Mrs. Burton doubtfully. "She couldn't take a summer cottage."

"What's the matter with that old house on the Mill Road?" suggested Mrs. Paxet. "Nobody ever seems to want it."

"If she's getting twenty cents in town," suggested Mrs. Jenks, with her usual eagerness, "and we offered her twenty-five——"

Mrs. Trescott clapped her hands, which were plump like her neck, and commanded attention.

"It's the very idea!" she exclaimed. "I know the man who owns that old house. It's simply falling to pieces, and I'm sure he'd rent it for a nominal rent if only to get it cleaned up. And if we paid her twenty-five cents, she'd make enough over her town rate to pay a small rent. Do you think you could persuade her to come, Mrs. Burton?"

"If you'll find out about the house," said Mrs. Burton, "I'll write her at once. And I'm sure she'd come. The

poor dear was so anxious to have a vacation."

Half an hour later they were still talking about scrub women. It is an inexhaustible subject.

Nothing could have been easier than persuading Mrs. Bright to come. Hers was a prompt, decisive nature, and she answered Mrs. Burton's letter by the very next mail.

MRS. BURTON DEAR MADAM: YOUR welcome letter to hand and finds me well but glad of an opportunity to leave the warm city for the good old summer time as the song says. What you write sounds good to me and I am wise to how the ladies who need help feel about the price asked by the ladies who work out. I think such ladies ask to much dont you Mrs. Burton madam. I mean the ladies who work out and I think 25 cents is a good price for good work. It is so long now that I do not remember when I ever had a vakashun in the sweet green country. Mamie is well and so is Annabelle and Margaret and they are all like wild things with joy at the thought of picking the dandy lions and running about on the grass and seeing a cow and a pig. Is it not queer they have seen lions and elypants and gerrafs and such fierce beasts but no cow or pig. It would pay the circus I think to have them too. So we will be there sure on Wednesday next rain or shine but I hope it will be a fair day to travvel and no more now from your's truly

DELIA BRIGHT.

And on Wednesday next, which happily turned out a good day to "travel," Mrs. Bright, an ancient trunk, and three young children arrived at the old house on the Mill Road and took possession. It was one of those houses—nearly all summer colonies have them—which remain untenanted from season to season, picturesque, but without modern conveniences. Some day, unless it fell to pieces, it would either be torn down or built over. Meantime the grass grew high around the time-stained sign, "For Sale or To Let," and hid the name of the person to whom one might apply for further information. Mrs. Trescott, who knew



Mrs. Bright, an ancient trunk, and three young children arrived at the old house on the Mill Road and took possession.

him, had conducted the negotiations. She had secured it for a nominal rental, which included the miscellaneous odds and ends of furniture that remained within it. There was even the ruin of a piano.

Mrs. Bright was a scrubber by profession. For three days she "hired herself." Unestimated pails of water, for the sturdy mother of young children was prodigal of material, came up from the yard well and boiled on the kitchen stove. Cakes of yellow soap, of which Mrs. Bright preferred the "Happy Home" variety, vanished as if by magic, leaving cleanliness and a soapy smell. Sandsoap disintegrated. Scrubbing brushes were worn out. Mamie, Annabelle, and Margaret were rapidly spanked in turn for looking down the well to see where the water came from; and Mamie, who was just old enough to look after the others when her mother was away on business, was spanked twice, once for herself and once for allowing her juniors to climb on the well curb.

Throughout this splendid bustle and activity, motor cars and carriages stopped at the gate, while girlishly attired ladies of various ages waded through the tall grass, interviewed the new tenant, and came away with contented, hopeful faces. One had only to glance at the scene to know that Mrs. Bright would earn her twenty-five cents an hour. And before the third day it was common knowledge, as such things get about in Mattekeeset, that the mere threat of dispensing with their services had brought Mrs. Regan and Mrs. Murphy down to thirty cents, and Mrs. Smith, who had a husband to support, down to twenty-five. Mrs. Timilty, however, stood firm. She had got thirty-five, she said, and she would starve before she took less.

Saturday morning, Mr. Smith, who spent a good deal of his time watching the trains come and go at the railway

station, commented upon the situation with some force.

"Twenty-five cents an hour fer scrubbin'," said Mr. Smith, "is a dog's wages, an' if Mrs. Smith stands fer it, I don't.

" 'We'll git along,' says I, 'until times look up an' there's more doin' in my own trade.'

"These ottermobles have played punk with the harness makers, an' that's a fact. I don't ask anybody to work fer *me*, but if a man's wife wants to do a little housework on the side fer luxuries, I ain't the man to stop her. Man an' wife is pardners. If a man gits down on his luck, dammit if I see why the old woman shouldn't turn in her bit. But when it comes to another female buttin' in an' takin' the bread an' butter right out of a man's wife's mouth, it's time to do somethin'. A woman like that is a traitor to her class," said Mr. Smith forcibly, and struck a match on his trousers. "An', what's more, she's goin' to hear from *me*."

And to show the baggageman what he could do when aroused, Mr. Smith spat halfway across the railway track.

Mr. Smith carried out this threat that same afternoon. He found Mrs. Bright operating a lawn mower which she had borrowed from a neighbor. There was nothing that Mr. Smith enjoyed more than seeing other people work, and he leaned comfortably on the fence.

"Cuttin' the grass?" asked Mr. Smith.

"No," said Mrs. Bright wittily. "I'm bathin' the children." She stopped operations long enough to regard the result with considerable satisfaction. "It's just like a safety razor fer grass," she commented. "The path looks like I had a jag on, but it ain't so bad fer a amychewer."

Mr. Smith spat over the fence with great dignity.

"You're this new Mrs. Bright, ain't yer?" he inquired.

"I'm Mrs. Bright, all right," replied the mother of young children. "But I was never a new one. I'm not the kind that marries a widdener."

"You're new *here*," continued the visitor, "an' that's why I've called to see ye. My name's Smith."

"I used to know a man named Smith," said Mrs. Bright, resuming her occupation. "Maybe you're a relation. He worked in a butcher shop."

Mr. Smith thought this over. It seemed to him that Mrs. Bright was indulging in superfluous and rather weak humor, but she looked serious as she approached the gate, came about with the mower, and set a course back to the house. It is difficult to talk easily with a person who is walking away from you, and Mr. Smith came through the gate and walked beside her.

"P'rhaps you don't know," said he persuasively, "that women who go out to work in this town git thirty-five cents a hour."

"Do they so?" said Mrs. Bright. "Well, I guess they're smarter'n me."

"What they have done," said Mr. Smith, speaking very much like a correspondence school, "you can do."

"It's kind of ye to say so," said Mrs. Bright, bowing. "An' now I see ye nearer, it might be that you're the husband of a lady I've heard of in me own way of livin'?"

Mr. Smith admitted it.

"There's nothin' I hate more," he explained, "than to see a stranger taken in. An' so when Mrs. Smith told me you was goin' to work fer twenty-five an hour, it got my goat."

"She don't know no better, Mrs. Smith," says I, "an' the rich is imposin' on her, as they allus do if they git a chance. As you're busy this afternoon, I'll go tell her m'self."

"I s'pose you're jest itchin' to show

me how to run this safety razor," said Mrs. Bright irrelevantly. "Ye see, bein' onused to it, I ain't quite up to cuttin' the grass an' listenin' to the conversation of a thoughtful an' illigant speaker like yerself. So if ye'll jest push this thing a minit or two while I lug out a couple of chairs——"

Mr. Smith somewhat reluctantly assumed charge of the lawn mower, and pushed it with a fair imitation of energy as Mrs. Bright disappeared into the house. He had not come there to cut Mrs. Bright's grass, but he was willing to make a reasonable sacrifice for the success of his embassy, and he felt it would be unwise to refuse the mower while his hostess was getting him a chair to sit on. It would probably be easier to push the mower than to lug out a chair; and it would certainly be easier to sit in the chair than to walk back and forth while Mrs. Bright mowed.

He pushed the mower to the gate and back to the house, and then to the gate again, and then even more slowly back to the house. A bee buzzed past him and a yellow butterfly fluttered in front, but Mr. Smith had no eye for these beauties; and although he was anything but an impatient man by nature, it seemed to him that Mrs. Bright was a long time getting the chairs.

A motor car passed, and the occupants, turning and staring back as if they had seen something that startled them, made Mr. Smith feel that he had thoughtlessly put himself in a false position. The difference between a gentleman who is lightly amusing himself with a lawn mower while a lady gets him a chair and a man who is actually mowing a lawn is hardly to be indicated by pantomime; yet there was something indefinable about Mrs. Bright that made Mr. Smith hesitate to stop mowing and sit down on the doorstep.

He began to count trips, and by the

time he had counted ten back-and-forth journeys, he was sure that something had happened. It flashed upon Mr. Smith somewhat belatedly that he might at least have suggested the doorstep. He dropped the handle of the mower and knocked politely on the door.

There was no answer. Mr. Smith, gently and then with more violence, tried the door. It was locked. He knocked again, more vigorously than he had done anything for a long time, but the house gave back only the echo of his resounding knuckles. And why had Mrs. Bright locked the door—if she intended to come right out again?

There ensued a silence, broken at length by words, perfectly good words in themselves, but used by Mr. Smith in a way that cannot be here repeated—followed from the other side of the door by an unmistakable gurgling noise very much like suppressed mirth. Mr. Smith recoiled from the inhospitable portal, giving it a final kick. He started down the path. He returned and seized the handle of the lawn mower, dragging it after him to the gate, through it, and some distance along the road. There, with further repetition of vain words, he left the mower and returned to the railway station in time to assist at the arrival of the six-o'clock train.



"I suppose you're jest itchin' to show me how to run this safety razor," said Mrs. Bright irrelevantly.

The next day being Sunday, Mrs. Burton motored along the Mill Road with Mrs. Trescott, coöperation in the installation of Mrs. Bright having endeared them to each other, and this time Mrs. Bright brought out the chairs. They sat on the porch, while Mamie, Annabelle, and Margaret hunted for late "dandy lions" and were equally pleased with newly arrived "buttery cups."

"It's a fine, helpful place," said Mrs. Bright, "an' everybody that good to me! See the nice path to the front gate. Mr. Smith, Mrs. Smith's husband, came over an' helped me cut that."

"Smith!" exclaimed Mrs. Trescott. "Smith cut a lawn!"

"He's as kind as Carnegie. He came

over to warn me against bein' imposed on by the rich. But while he was puttin' me wise to local conditions, I remembered that I had a supper to get an' left him shavin' the grass till I had more time for conversation. After he'd finished workin', the good man started to take the machine back where I'd borrowed it, forgettin' that he didn't know where it was. But he took it halfway—bless him—an' saved me half the labor. Mebbe ye didn't know, Mrs. Burton, ma'am, that the old house is ha'nted?"

"Mrs. Bright," said Mrs. Trescott, with impressive emphasis, "there is only one so-called haunted house in Matteekeset, and that is over on the West River. And it is no more haunted than I am."

"I haven't met the ghost meself," admitted Mrs. Bright. "But then, as I was telling Mrs. Murphy and Mrs. Regan——"

"I thought you'd hear from *them* sooner or later," said Mrs. Trescott.

"We're in the same way of livin'," said Mrs. Bright cheerfully, "an' it was to be expected they'd call on me."

"And so they tried to frighten you with a ghost."

"It was kindly meant. We talked of this an' that, an' it was only toward the end of the call that the subject came up."

"I wouldn't say anythin' about *that*, Mrs. Murphy," says Mrs. Regan.

"I should be shirkin' a friendly duty if I didn't," says Mrs. Murphy.

"We niver seen it ourselves," says Mrs. Regan.

"We'd be dead if we had," says Mrs. Murphy.

"And what haven't ye seen?" says I, for they'd stirred up me curiosity. "If there's anythin' more I can show ye, I'd be only too happy."

"I hate to tell ye," says Mrs. Murphy. "Iv'rybody that has seen it has died within the week, an' that's why

nobody will live in the house. The house is ha'nted, Mrs. Bright. There's a curse on the roof."

"I'm not likely to go up there meself," says I. "I'll be more troubled if there's rats in the cellar. What's it ha'nted by?"

"Some say a man an' some a woman an' some a child," says Mrs. Murphy, lookin' about nervous. "I wouldn't stay in it a night for money. The longest anybody iver stayed here without seein' it was three weeks——"

"They were trying to make you uncomfortable, Mrs. Bright," said Mrs. Burton reassuringly.

"I wouldn't suspicion it," said Mrs. Bright. "I'd have felt it my duty to do the same by a stranger. An' it didn't disturb me."

"It may be so, Mrs. Murphy," I says, "but you'd be safe enough now. I've niver known of a ghost yet that could abide the smell of soap an' water. But I thank ye fer tellin' me." An' then another lady, a Mrs. Timilty, came in an' the conversation drifted."

"Timilty!" exclaimed Mrs. Trescott. "And how did you like Mrs. Timilty?"

"Fine," said Mrs. Bright, with unmistakably genuine enthusiasm. "She's a lady who minds her own business an' don't bother others. We found much in common."

On Monday, Mrs. Bright took her place in the domestic economy of Matteekeset, and the relation of capital and labor began readjusting itself to the law of economics mentioned by Mrs. Trescott. With a demand for labor equivalent to the combined work of four scrub women and a supply of laborers represented by five, Mrs. Timilty naturally got the least work. There were now three tariffs:

Timilty, thirty-five cents; Regan and Murphy, thirty cents; Smith and Bright, twenty-five cents.

Under these tariffs, Smith and Bright were working full time; Regan



"I hate to tell ye," says Mrs. Murphy. "Iverybody that has seen it has died within the week, an' that's why nobody will live in the house. The house is ha'nted, Mrs. Bright."

and Murphy part time; and Timilty less time.

On the Monday following, there were still three tariffs:

Timilty, thirty-five cents; Murphy, thirty cents; Smith, Bright, and Regan, twenty-five cents.

On the next Monday morning there were two tariffs:

Timilty, thirty-five cents; Smith, Bright, Regan, and Murphy, twenty-five cents.

Under these tariffs, for the operation of the law of economics had now extended throughout the colony, Smith, Bright, Regan, and Murphy were working full time, and Timilty was not working at all. Thirty-five cents was a fixed principle with Mrs. Timilty; it was her banner. If she perished, and

her small children with her, she would perish with her banner still waving. Yet there was something splendidly magnanimous about her. It was common knowledge in Matteekeset that whereas Smith, Regan, and Murphy regarded Bright with undisguised hatred, Timilty and Bright were positively chummy. The little Timilties played with the little Brights; and in the long summer twilights, after the working day was over, Mrs. Timilty and Mrs. Bright could often be seen amiably conversing on the porch of Mrs. Bright's residence. Evidently, as Mrs. Bright had said, they found "much in common."

But Mrs. Timilty was not wasting her time.

It was she who one morning reported

to Mrs. Burton that Mrs. Bright would be unable to come for the day's work. Mrs. Timilty, being pressed, admitted that she was at liberty to supply the deficiency—but she always got thirty-five cents an hour. Mrs. Burton paid it.

"I don't understand it at all," said Mrs. Burton, meeting Mrs. Trescott and Mrs. Paxet that evening at the yacht club. "I went to see her, and I found her perfectly well. And what do you think? She was starting a garden. I told her it was absurd to start a garden this late in the season. But she said she'd have just as much fun planting it."

"Planting seeds that can't possibly come up in time to do any good!" said Mrs. Paxet. "Do you know, my dear, it looks to me as if *we* had been done. I don't pretend to see how. You paid Timilty?"

"Thirty-five cents," admitted Mrs. Burton.

"To-morrow," said Mrs. Paxet prophetically, "I have Murphy. And I shall have to pay Murphy thirty-five cents. I feel it in my pocketbook."

"I have always distrusted that intimacy," said Mrs. Trescott. "But the woman can't live without work. The worst that can happen is that Timilty has persuaded her to take a week off."

But, somehow or other, within the next forty-eight hours, it was common knowledge in Matteekeset that Mrs. Bright had retired from scrubbing for the rest of the summer. She was going to have a vacation. And by the next

Monday morning there was only one tariff. It stood:

Timilty, Regan, Murphy, and Smith, thirty-five cents.

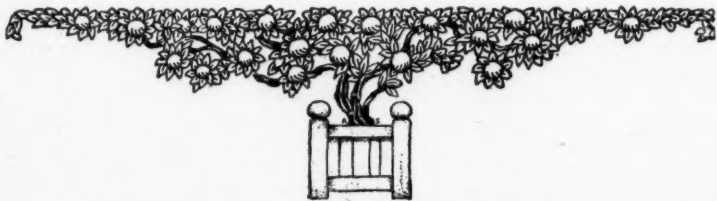
"When I think," said Mr. Smith, about a month later, as he waited for the always exciting advent of the forty-three train, "of my wife supportin' another woman in idleness *an'* luxury, it gets my goat.

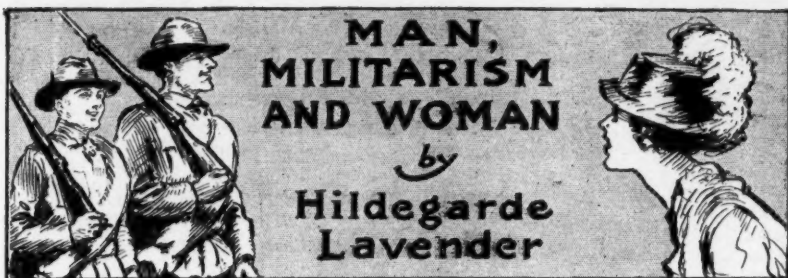
"You four women git together," said I, 'an' run her out of town. See? I ain't tellin' ye how to do it, becoss it ain't a man's place to act that way agin' a woman. You jest git together *an' run her out*. But as fer payin' her five cents every time ye make thirty-five, like Mrs. Timilty's tryin' to talk ye into, it'll jest be layin' down *an'* lettin' the Bright woman sit on ye. Four times five is twenty,' I said, 'an' if you women are itchin' to pay *somebody* twenty cents a hour fer doin' nothin', pay it to me *an'* have somethin' to show fer it.'

"But it weren't no use *me* talkin'. Timilty's the queen. Timilty's the boss. I'm jest Mr. Smith. And so there they are, *an'* Mrs. Smith with 'em, all git-tin' thirty-five cents a hour fer honest work *an'* payin' in twenty to the Bright woman fer doin' nothin' but set in a garden chair a-watchin' fer vegetables that'll never be ripe."

Mr. Smith spat with skill and re-lighted his pipe.

"It gets my goat," he said earnestly, "*an'* that's a fact."





Author of "Leaks," "The Changing Home," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY LAURA E. FOSTER

IT was the bride's winter outfit that provoked the argument. A very becoming costume it was, of broad-cloth, in seal brown, braided by a tailor who properly treated braiding as a fine art, buttoned snugly to the throat, where it met a close, straight, round collar. The buttons had centers of bright-colored bronze in dark-brown rims. The bride's hat was a jaunty little turban, very knowing and chic; and being knowing and chic, it was practically unadorned, save where, in front, a perky little cockade reared itself aloft.

In response to a fairly general request from her comrades of the tea table, the bride revolved before them and gave them a chance to see the costume from every angle. For the most part, they expressed unqualified approval; the color suited the blond freshness of the wearer, the lines were excellent—who was the tailor, by the way?—and the touch of gold, or brass, or whatever it was, in the buttons lighted up the dark cloth admirably. The bride, with the pleased though deprecating smile decreed by social custom for such occasions, sat down. And then she observed that the unfriendly eyes of the débutante were studying her coldly.

"If," said this young person rudely,

"you only had a chin-strap attachment to that hat of yours, you'd be a perfect Lady Tommy Atkins!"

"Don't you like it?" inquired the bride, not at all anxiously, but negligently, as one who asks not for information, but merely for form's sake.

"Like it! Of course I don't like it!" replied the débutante explosively. "It's such things as that that bring about wars."

"What on earth are you talking about child?" The grandmother hastened to interpose her question between the militant débutante and the bride's preparing retort.

"Yes, what do you mean?" chorused other peacefully disposed persons, while the hostess made quite a clatter with the teakettle by way of a diversion.

"I didn't mean to be rude," said the débutante contritely to the bride. "I spoke hastily. But I've been to a peace meeting to-day——"

"Don't go to another if it has this effect upon you!" advised the hostess, but the débutante ignored the interruption.

"To a woman's peace meeting, and it was brought home to me how much women are responsible for the warlike spirit in men, and how hard we should all work to overcome it."



"If," said this young person rudely, "you only had a chin-strap attachment to that hat of yours, you'd be a perfect Lady Tommy Atkins!"

"Oh, so there's another thing that woman is responsible for, is there?" groaned the doctor, arriving in time to overhear this speech. "Poor woman! How does she manage it this time, Kitten? Is it that her extravagance drives nations to need new colonies—new sources of wealth—or what?"

"It's this way," explained the débutante earnestly. "Women let their children play with drums and lead soldiers, and as the twig is bent, the tree's inclined. And women flatter the warlike spirit in man by borrowing from him soldier's styles—brass buttons, cockades, braided effects, military jackets, like the bride's. And they teach their children warlike songs and hymns—it's dreadful! Have you ever thought how many even of the hymns we sing in church are based upon the idea of wars and armies and such things? 'His blood-red-banner-streams-afar' sort of hymns, you know, and 'Onward, Christian Soldiers,' as if there were not an absolute negation between the fundamental idea of the word 'Christian' and the word 'soldier'——"

The débutante, having exhausted her breath in this rapid and obviously parrotlike review of the speeches of the morning's peace meeting, sank back in her chair and awaited comment, stretching out a hand for nourishment in the meantime.

"So that's why we have wars, is it? Because we don't insist upon a revision of the hymnal, and let the children play with tin soldiers?" The hostess' manner was argumentative as she placed in the débutante's outstretched hand a cup of tea. "You might just as well say that I trained the children to become keepers of zoos because I let them have Noah's arks with which to play!"

"Or locomotive engineers because you let them have trains of cars!" sniffed Madame Crœsus.

"Or ditch diggers because they have pails and shovels!" sneered another.

"I don't care!" After a sip of tea and a munch of muffin, the débutante was prepared to do battle for the theories that she had adopted without the formality of thought that morning. "If you had heard the speaker, you wouldn't laugh about it. I'm not a debater—I don't pretend to be a debater. But she made it quite clear that if women would only begin to train their children for peace in the nursery, and would discountenance everything military, instead of adopting military costumes as if they were the loveliest in the world, and—and—all that——"

"Why, then, that the principles of the Hague convention would be supreme in the lands, I suppose," the doctor helped out the débutante's collapsing speech.

"Well, anyway, that it would have a great effect," insisted the débutante.

"Of course," remarked the doctor meditatively, "the advocates of almost any cause generally insist upon making it ridiculous by being too detailed, too concrete. But there is a great deal in what our young friend's convincing orator apparently had to say—namely, that the time to train a child for peace and its ideals is while he is a child. Those most canny educators that ever lived, the Jesuits, knew that it was the standards of the early years that counted. What was it they used to say? Give them the first ten years of a child's life, and it mattered not at all who took the rest. Or words to that effect. Of course, they didn't just sit around with the children during those years—they educated! They definitely planted certain seeds in the children's minds, they definitely cultivated those seeds. I don't suppose even a Jesuit could get results without a system, a standard, an ideal. Which is about what the mothers try to do! How many children have any of you ever known definitely trained for peace?"

There were a few rather faint claims made. Madame Cræsus, for example, had once taken her daughter to the door of a great New York hotel ball-room, to see tables set for a peace luncheon.

"It was wonderful," she described it with enthusiasm. "Wonderful! It was to that poor, dear old woman, the Baroness von Suttner, you know—the one who got the Nobel peace prize for writing a book—I forget its name——"

"'Lay Down Your Arms,'" supplied the hostess.

"Oh, yes, that was it! And the peace society, or some one who believed in peace here, gave her a big luncheon. The walls were all hung with the flags of different nations and the Hague peace flag. And there were white roses, and white doves—— Really, it was too wonderful! Dozens of white doves fluttering in a great net in the center of the room! I took my daughter to see it. She was too young to come to the luncheon—wasn't asked, of course. I sent her home with her governess, afterward——"

"And did that sight make her a convert to the idea of peace?" inquired the doctor irascibly, breaking in upon Madame Cræsus' incoherent recollections.

"Well—er—she's a funny child!" said the mother apologetically. "The only thing that seemed to impress her was the doves. She thought they ought to be flying around outdoors somewhere, and she felt very sad to see them imprisoned."

"Sensible little girl!" commented the grandmother.

"Anyway," declared Madame Cræsus inconsequentially, "I can't help being glad that that nice old Austrian woman died before this terrible war began."

"Though I suppose that she, being a European woman of rank and of long, long experience, probably knew then that trouble was brewing," said the doc-

tor. "It was only in 1913, wasn't it, that she was here on her peace-propaganda work? And look at the world to-day!"

"Do you think all women are for peace, doctor?" asked Madame Cræsus, with the flattering air of addressing an authority.

"I believe," replied the doctor grimly, "that most women haven't the slightest idea whether they are for peace or war. I believe that most women have never given a month's honest thought to the subject. It has received less consideration than the color of their wall papers—even yet! I believe that there are not ten women out of every hundred, even among the so-called educated classes, who have studied enough history, or have studied history deeply enough, to know what part war has played in advancing or in retarding civilization. I believe that most women do not know what militarism costs in cold cash, in the restriction of social freedom—and so, of course, they can't know whether it is or isn't worth while! I dare say most women have a natural repugnance to the thought of being left widows, and most women have an æsthetic distaste for scenery converted into a shambles, and some undeveloped intellects like a soldierly uniform—and that is, I imagine, about as near and as far as women go in the matter of being for or against peace or war!"

"And how much more intelligently," inquired the hostess, with guileful sweetness, "do you suppose men regard the whole matter? Do all of them know just what war has done for the human race up to this time, and whether some other agency is now ready to take over the work formerly put upon steel and lead? How much better informed are the majority of men, dear doctor?"

The others laughed, and even the doctor smiled a grim sort of smile.

"I think the men of the so-called educated classes are a little bit better in-

formed than the women about the subject, but only a very little bit," she said. "But they are largely militaristic, and they have their own perfectly good reason for being militaristic—they like to fight. In the absence of a convincing argument against war, the instinctive love of fighting remains a good-enough argument for it. Indeed, even in the presence of perfectly convincing arguments against war, the instinctive love of a fight will prevail."

"What do you mean by saying that they like to fight? Harry doesn't," declared the bride.

"Harry says he doesn't, and perhaps believes that he doesn't," said the doctor oracularly.

"Seated by the library table any night, Harry—any Harry—will tell you that war is waste, and that he believes in peace, *but* that we should be prepared for war. And though, of course, it would break his heart to leave his bride—any Harry's bride—he has just been trying to see if there was a chance for him in the volunteer coast artillery!

"Doesn't like to fight? He probably doesn't go around like a bully, seeking trouble—but let trouble come, and you'll see! Suppose a man on the side-



"The walls were all hung with the flags of different nations and the Hague peace flag. And there were white roses, and white doves—really it was too wonderful!"

walk jostled him—is it Harry's instinct to step back and to bow pleasantly while he indicates that the sidewalk is quite at the other man's disposal? On the contrary, though that six inches of sidewalk is not needed by Harry for his perfectly comfortable progress to whatever place he is going, he contests with the jostler for its possession. They may not come to actual blows about it—or they may. And why? Because Harry—which means man, in this

case—likes to fight! He has been brought up on the theory that he must resent any infringement of his rights, that he must be always prepared to 'give a good account of himself' with his fists. We all know—every one of us here—that little boys are not punished for getting into fisticuffs with other little boys. They are expected to do it; they do it—and I have known more than one Christian home in which a small boy was punished, not for fighting, but for not 'taking care' of himself in a fight!"

There were several guilty glances exchanged.

"It's that sort of thing, far more than lead soldiers, which makes for maintenance of the warlike spirit in man," the doctor went on, after she had refilled her teacup. "The lead soldiers are, as some one said a while ago, about as potent to train up warriors as the Noah's ark animals are to train up menagerie men. But the deliberate development in boys of their native pugnacity is another matter. Mind you, girls are natively pugnacious, too. Two angels of four, with blond-haired doll babies and tea sets, will strike and kick and pull hair and scream when the inevitable moment of their dispute arrives, exactly as will two knickerbockered beings of the same age. But when little girls display their native pugnacity, they are snatched apart with exclamations of horror. They are taught that they have done something disgraceful—something not *comme il faut*. Little girls must never hit, kick, scream, or pull hair. I remember when I was a very small person, indeed—about four, I should say, for it is one of my earliest recollections. I was an ordinary little girl, like any other——"

"Never, never, doctor!" they told her, amiably jeering.

"Like any other," she persisted firmly. "And some one annoyed me as I played near the croquet lawn. My

reaction to that annoyance was exactly what a boy's would have been—I wanted to strike out at my annoyor. I did so. I did it with a croquet mallet that happened to be lying at hand. Mercifully, I did not fracture the skull of the misguided child who had ventured to oppose me. Of course, I was punished within an inch of my life. And, of course, my parents palely beheld in me a young murderer in the making. And it was dinned into my ears that a girl—a girl!—must never hit, never strike, never kick. A girl must run and tell nurse her troubles, and nurse will attend to them.

"But a boy—— Why, that very same week, when my brother came whimpering home after an unsuccessful encounter with the bully of the street, he was told never to bring those matters to the attention of his elders—he must either learn to whip the bully, or stand his own whipping without complaint. And they began to give him boxing lessons! If I tell you that now my brother is a rampant better-defense man and that I am a pacifist, insisting that I prefer an international nurse to whom to submit the matters of international dispute, will you say that we weren't both trained in childhood to be what we are?"

"But surely, doctor, after men grow up and are immersed in business and—er—have mature standards and interests and all——" they objected.

"I tell you," she interrupted, "they love to fight! I don't blame them. Of course, war itself may in time teach them not to care so much about it; there doesn't seem to be a great deal of the personal contact about battle in these days, and it can't be quite as gay a sporting proposition to kill a man without seeing him as it must be to kill him after you have glutted your eyes upon him! But, meantime, before the lesson of this war has sunk thoroughly home, I believe that men really like the

thought of battle. Deep in their unregenerate hearts, they regard it as the ultimate test of their manhood. Always, you understand, before it has taken them in hand and given them a taste of it! The least jingoistic persons of my acquaintance are beautiful, wise, tranquil old gentlemen, who were wounded at Antietam or lived through the Wilderness, or maybe had a taste of Libbey Prison or Andersonville."

"Well, all I have to say," interrupted the hostess argumentatively, "is that the man who was whitewashing my cellar the other day said that he would cut off his fingers if the United States should go to war, so that he would be disqualified for service. No, he was not a hyphenated American of any sort. He was just a workingman who has always had an awfully hard time to make ends meet."

"Ah!" cried the doctor triumphantly. "I was just coming to that. I was just coming to the men of the laboring classes! So far, as, of course, you understood, I have been speaking only of the men of the professional and business classes, of the husbands and fathers and brothers of women like ourselves. But the men of the underpaid, precarious, seasonal occupations—ah, it is in them that women will find their



"But when little girls display their native pugnacity, they are snatched apart with exclamations of horror."

allies in peace agitation when women themselves really begin to take peace seriously. As a matter of fact, women are only toying with it now, even in this country. They are all for peace, with so many reservations that they might as well be out and out for war!

"But see—the men of the more comfortable strata of society find in the thought of war something that really appeals to them. It is adventure; it is comradeship; it is patriotism; it is, as I said before, the final test of their manhood. However much their intellects, their reason, their logic, may decry war and cause them to agree that it



"He and his two oldest boys promptly gave themselves a vacation and went into training there."

is a hideous waste, a defiance of religion, a stupid anachronism, nevertheless something within them more potent than intellect loves the thought of a fight. But the man of the industrial classes has had his fight ever since he was old enough to be apprenticed to the plumber, or to carry a hod for the bricklayer and the plasterer. He has had to fight in order to live. And he has found comradeship in banding himself with his fellows to make the terms of that fight less difficult, less impos-

sible. He has his cause—it is the cause of labor. His manhood has been tested by a trial even more difficult than that of arms—by the ability to wrest a living out of the world. He doesn't need war to make him feel himself a fine fellow. You see——"

"But, doctor, dear," interrupted the debutante, lots of laboring men *do* go to war. Why, isn't that the reason that women have had to undertake so much of the work in factories, in mines, in fields, on street cars—everywhere—in Europe?"

"Of course he goes to war—the workingman—in those countries where they have a conscript army," replied the doctor. "But have you noticed how England, which has not employed conscription in the past, has had to send delegations of statesmen

to persuade striking miners to keep on working in the mines, and other delegations of statesmen to threaten factory hands with all sorts of punishment if they didn't get to work turning out arms for the army? I don't mean to say, of course, that my statements are true of every individual in any class, or, perhaps, even of a large proportion of any class. But I do mean to say that it seems to me the dim, typical figure—the composite photograph, so to call it—of each of the two classes is as I

have stated—the composite figure of our class, the middle class, is the man who thinks that, on the whole, war isn't such a bad thing; and the composite type of the laboring classes is the man who feels, with women, that the price of war is too heavy to be paid."

"Did anybody go to Plattsburg?" asked the hostess, while the others looked argumentative, but scarcely prepared to answer the doctor's declarations.

"I did," replied that active woman promptly. "It will not surprise you to hear that my brother, who, as I told you, was given boxing lessons at the age of eight, considered the business men's camp at Plattsburg one of the most magnificent things in the world; and that he and his two oldest boys promptly gave themselves a vacation and went into training there. I went up to see them, along with my sister-in-law and the girls, and I don't mind telling you that a good many of my nebulous views on man, woman, and militarism were crystallized right there.

"They were working hard, of course, those men, but they were having a good time. Mark—that's my brother—wasn't working much harder than he is accustomed to work when he goes off into the Maine woods for a month's fishing and hunting in the fall. He was getting very much the same sort of benefit from the experience—physically, I mean. He was hardening up his muscles, reducing his waistline—which needs a strenuous regimen for reduction about once a year—eating simple food with a great appetite, sleeping practically in the open—and he was doing it all with the glorious thought that he was helping his country.

"It seemed to me to be so in the case of most of the men there. They were having as good a time as a crowd of boys with tissue-paper helmets and toy drums. I don't mean to say that they weren't working and that they weren't

learning something—of course they were. But they were enjoying themselves thoroughly.

"Now, I do claim that a five-dollar-a-day carpenter with a wife and five children to support on the five—and a working year of seven or eight months—couldn't have taken that month of training in the same spirit. He couldn't afford it, you see. And he didn't really need it as much as Mark and his companions; the carpenter gets a fair amount of physical exercise and open-air life in the ordinary routine of his calling, and his food is likely to be simple all the year round."

"It all sounds like sophistry to me," said the grandmother vigorously. "I believe that the men of all classes are ready to die in defense of their country, if need be."

"It seems to me," the doctor insisted, "that the sort of patriotism that wants to settle all disputes with the fist, so to speak—that wants to resent every infringement of dignity with a blow—is a good deal of a luxury. Hard-working people haven't the time for it. They haven't the time for the fight, and they haven't the time to lay up for repairs after the fight. About all the time they have to spare is enough to notify the policeman at the corner that they have been injured, and that they will appear in court at ten o'clock next Tuesday morning to lay the matter before a judge."

"Somehow you take all the picturesqueness out of life," grumbled the bride.

"Picturesqueness is a luxury that most of us aren't rich enough to pay the price of," insisted the doctor. "It was a lot more picturesque when a gentleman, upon being called a liar or a cheat or a coward by another gentleman, promptly challenged his vilifier to a duel. I agree with you that a grassy field, about daybreak on a May morning, with a little group of gentlemen in

æsthetic costumes standing about with swords or pistols, as the case might be, was infinitely more picturesque than a horrid, stuffy, malodorous courtroom down on Division Street, say, with a suit for slander in progress. But the courtroom and the suit for slander are much less expensive than the duel.

"Even in the good old days, when the duel was popular, it was only the so-called gentle classes who indulged in it. It was recognized as being beyond the means of yeomen, hinds, clerks, messengers, and the like. If only wars were as discriminately conducted! If they were only fought to the finish by those high powers that have time for them—the high powers whose widows will be well provided for, the kings and congresses, the diplomats and presidents! One might almost be willing to let them go on indefinitely in that case. But they wouldn't. They'd stop with the most spectacular abruptness!"

"And do you really think, then," asked the bride, "that the time will come when nations will not go to war with each other?"

"I think it will," replied the doctor solemnly. "It may not be in our day—it probably will not be in our day. But by and by, after another century or so

of wanton waste and destruction, after the later generations have tired of ancient war taxes, all the mothers in the world are going to unite in training up a race of boys who will arbitrate their disputes as girls have always been trained to do. And all the workmen in the world are going to do, really and truly, what they threatened to do before this war broke out—stand together, brother workman and brother workman, whether the flag that floats above their capitol be black and orange, or red and white and blue, or starred or barred, or whatever! For women will not forever submit to see their work, their peculiar contribution to the universe—that contribution is human life—destroyed for nothing. And workmen will finally declare that the brotherhood of industry, the understanding of labor's needs and poverty's needs, is a stronger, closer-ribbed bond than any bond of nationality."

"Why, doctor! You talk like a socialist!" gasped Madame Crœsus.

The doctor looked at her, concentrating several volumes of opinion into one glance.

"Have I been talking to you all these months," she demanded, "without having conveyed that impression before?"

PHYLLIDA

ONCE I saw her in the dawn,
 Playing like a lissome fawn,
 As the sudden autumn sun
 Changed the field to gold from dun.
 Tawny hair flung by the breeze,
 Hanging quite below her knees;
 Laughing eyes shot by the blue
 Of the eastern sky's best hue;
 Curving lips and snowy breast
 Gleaming on the hillock's crest;
 Dimples flashing with her laughter,
 Struck by dismay coming after—
 Fled she like a frightened fawn,
 When she saw me in the dawn.

LYON MEARSON.



William and Mary

—BY—

Margaret Schiller



ILLUSTRATED BY MAYO BUNKER

MARY BARNWELL and her husband were going to the city.

They were progressing thither as fast as the wheels of the train known as the Peanut Express could revolve, but they were not going fast enough for the desires of Mary's heart. That was beating in happy anticipation of the day before her, and singing a little song to the hum of the wheels: "Hat, suit, dress, shoes; hat, suit, dress, shoes," over and over, with a jolt at the end and a hasty and conscience-smitten "and something for the children."

It was her day, the day that had helped her through many a week of flat, hopeless drudgery. Around it was shed a glow wonderfully delicate and idyllic, the framework of dreams. It was, indeed, a symbol of many things. It was the outward sign of the prosperity that was theirs again after financial stress; more than that, it stood for emancipation, for self-expression. Through all her being she felt the warmth and joy of life. She was, perhaps, even more elated than she knew; she had scarcely touched food that morning.

Her husband sat beside her, reading his paper. The halo hung over him, too. She saw not only the kindly honesty of his face and the broad stature that marked him out from other men; she felt a little thrill of romance. The morning was young, and they were starting out together.

Turning, she caught a glimpse of herself in a mirror and laughed softly. Ah, truly it was two years since she had come to the city—and she looked it!

She pulled her husband's arm so that he stopped reading perforce.

"Aren't you ashamed," she asked demurely, "to be seen with your country relative?"

It was delicious to her to be rallying him. The spirit of badinage was part of the charm of the day. Mutual kindness had never failed husband and wife, but light-hearted fun had not flourished in the soil of the last two years.

"Now, Mary," expostulated William, "you look all *right*!"

"Very stylish?" pursued Mary. Her eyes grew misty. She was reflecting that, thanks to dear love, doubtless she *was* "all right" in her husband's sight. "As nice"—her glance wandered over the car—"as anybody here? As that woman in blue?"

William followed her glance obediently.

"The one with the black hat and the white ribbon sticking out?" he asked, with sudden interest. "Why, that's Mrs. Perry."

"Who is Mrs. Perry?" asked Mary; but she received no answer, for the woman in question had turned at that moment, recognized Mr. Barnwell, and beckoned to him with a daintily gloved hand.

"I'll be back in a minute," said William to his wife, and stepped briskly forward.

Mary watched them for a moment, as they shook hands, and William leaned down to speak to her. Then her glance wandered to the car window. She had

been away so little recently that it was a joy merely to look on other pastures, other red-roofed barns, to see peaceful herds and busy poultry, knowing that they asked for no care at her hands. She saw other women, farmers' wives, standing at the gate to watch the train go by, their aprons tossed back over their shoulders, and her heart was filled with an immense pity that they must stay at home. She was so buoyant in her plans for the day. She began to rehearse the details, as if she had not done so a thousand times. She wished William might go about with her—saleswomen were so disagreeable to a poorly dressed woman—but probably he would have business appointments. He might, however, be able to spend an hour with her; she would ask him.

She looked around. William was still at the other end of the car, sitting down now by Mrs.—what was her name?—Mrs. Perry. He did not have the air of one who intended to rise immediately. Mary regarded him impatiently. What was he talking about that could keep him so long? Well, she would not be cross. Peevishness had become a besetting sin in these last months. She was naturally high-spirited, and one of the lessons she had found hardest to learn was bearing submissively the yoke of circumstance. So she turned her attention away for another ten minutes, though this time she found less to interest her in the changing scenes outside the car window.

Then she looked back expectantly. By this time, surely, William would be leaving. Mere politeness could have no further claim on him. He would be remembering his wife and the need of further plans for their day. But William was not making his adieux. He looked, indeed, peculiarly set. She could see one large hand spread out on his knee as he was wont to hold it in relaxed moments. He did not seem, moreover, at all politely bored. There

was no mistaking the interest in the turn of his head as he listened to Mrs. Perry's animated talk. She was telling something with swift, graceful gestures of her slender hands, something amusing evidently, for Mary could hear William's hearty laugh. She was not being amused. She felt suddenly tired and very lonesome. The little artificial strength and gayety of the morning disappeared. The noise of the car became disagreeable to her.

She began to speculate who Mrs. Perry might be. She had never heard her name mentioned; she was certain that William had never spoken of her. Yet they were talking together like old friends. For the first time, William's ready sociability was distasteful to her. Always before, she had adored that native instinct that taught him to do a dozen little services that other men were too busy to see the need of. He was forever helping old ladies with their bundles, opening car windows, rescuing children from possible disaster, and doing it all with that look of simple kindness. People were constantly saying to her, "Your husband is the kindest man!" Was he "kind" now? He didn't look it. He was *interested*, and he was staying away to please himself.

It was natural enough! Mrs. Perry was the most attractive, the best-dressed woman she had seen for months, not over-dressed or conspicuous in any detail; her black straw hat was simply trimmed with white, and her suit was plain, but there was a subtle air of distinction about her garments. They suggested casually that there were plenty more like them at home. William looked well, too. His new suit fitted him to a nicety. Mary had always seen to it that he should go to his work well dressed.

She glanced at her own dowdy clothes with sudden resentment. She had not always looked like this. She had been well dressed, too, five years

ago. She remembered the dainty clothes she had worn when she came from her home town to the little place in the country where they were to play at farming, and where William was to raise his own trees for sale. Why, the very atrocity on her head had been considered charming at the time. She reviewed the stages of descent from that time to the present. Her trousseau, altered and realtered, had really done very well for the first three years. Then the first baby had been sick, and the second baby had come weak and frail, and the frost that had never entered into their calculations had

destroyed the nursery stock that meant half a year's livelihood to them. There had not been a moment to spend on thoughts of pretty clothes; scarcely an opportunity to wear them if she had possessed them. It had all been a nightmare, awakened from at last, but leaving her haggard and worn out.

She wondered whether Mrs. Perry had any children, and whether she was ever up with them half the night, and then worked all the day. Hardly. She looked as if she gave a great deal of time to herself. Oh, it paid! Those were the women who always attracted men, while other women, while she, sat alone, looking on. And they had started off so happily an hour ago! She brooded over it in bitter self-pity, her eyes blinded with tears.



"I'll be back in a minute," said William to his wife.

When she could see clearly again, William was in the act of restoring the gloves that Mrs. Perry had dropped. His little air of gallantry was exasperating to her beyond expression. It was so different from the casual fashion in which he picked things up for her. It matched the touch of coquetry in his companion's manner. She became conscious of a rising flood of anger, and she strove to keep it down, for better than any one else she knew her limitations at present. She had these moments with the children, when work was pressing and they tried her too hard. She had learned to hurry away from them and stay by herself, trembling, with her hands pressed to her

ears to keep out the noise of their crying until she had command of herself again, and could be wise and just. She must keep as firm hold of herself now.

But she grew very nervous. She could scarcely sit still, and yet her whole body was tense. Her feet beat restlessly on the floor, and she was physically unable to keep her eyes from the two in front, who sat apparently oblivious of any one but themselves. Not a look or a gesture escaped her. How had they come to know each other so well? How often had they met, and where? If only she could look away and forget! If only she could ease this strange, burning pain in her eyes!

They were talking more and more seriously now; Mrs. Perry was looking up into William's face, and he was speaking rapidly, with suppressed excitement. Finally they moved closer together, and bent forward over something in Mrs. Perry's hands; she leaned toward him until the bow in her hat almost grazed his face. At the same moment, a neighbor passed down the car. He spoke to Mary, looked around for William, and, discovering him, indulged in a facetious remark and a cheerful wink.

It was the last drop. Again she felt the flood sweeping up through her whole being, and this time she did not try to check it. Higher and higher it surged, sweeping away the barriers that reason would have interposed. It rose to her very throat and choked her. Her head swam. The thing was unendurable; it was monstrous. She was a byword. The whole countryside would hear of her shame. Just what that shame was she did not analyze. She could not; her mind was incapable of coherent thought. Her ideas were utterly unformed, a chaotic mass of ugly things that had sprung up at a touch into sudden terrible life. She had

never dwelt much on evil, and it had not entered her experience, but she had heard and she had read, and at that moment the unheeded other self that registers and never forgets rendered up every bit of idle gossip, every newspaper tale of infidelity, in a maddening whirl, and somewhere in the center of it sat her husband with his face close to this other woman.

She was almost gasping for breath; the blood beat in her temples. She was no longer herself; for the time being she was another woman, created by worn-out nerves. She was paying at last for every hour that she had watched at night, for all the added work that she had done when the need to save was greatest, most of all for the little lives that she had brought into being these last five years. All for him! She had loved the sacrifice till this minute. Now she felt she hated it and him.

They were nearing the last station before the city. "Victor!" bawled out the conductor. The train slowed down to a standstill. She started. A sudden resolve hurried her to the platform and down the steps. Half a minute, and the train pulled out. No one had seen her. She had been on the last car, and even the conductor's back had been turned.

The physical act of getting out of the car, and the contact with the fresh air, relieved the terrible tenseness that had been holding her in a vise. She followed the train with her eyes, and then looked about her. The surroundings were new to her, the platform deserted. An overwhelming feeling of loneliness amounting almost to panic swept over her. It was so long since she had been away from home that this little village, only twenty miles away from the farm, filled her with terror. She had a frantic desire to run after the train. The station agent was watching her curiously. His glance wan-

dered over her attire, and, smiling, he turned to some one in the office. Two faces peered out at her from the window.

All other emotions in Mary's heart vanished in rage. How dared they judge her by her clothes? But their smiles were a flash of lightning illuminating her path. Just why she had left the train, she could not have told, nor what the future held for her. But what she was about to do this day she knew absolutely. First she would have nourishing food; then she would go to the city, to the stores, and spend, *spend*. If it took every cent she possessed, she would come home looking like other women. The pain in her heart she put resolutely from her. One thing only should occupy her this day.

Trains ran often, and it was only ten o'clock when she found herself in the millinery department of the big store where she was wont to "trade." She was unemotional, businesslike, alert. She had drawn plenty of money from the bank. She bethought herself of an old friend who was clerk there, and found her without delay.



"I'll take that one," said Mary, with a catch in her voice.

"Mattie," she whispered, after the first greeting, "don't look at me, but sell me a real hat."

Mattie was sympathetic and tasteful.

"What are you wearing your hair so tight for, dearie?" she questioned. "There! That's better."

She fluffed out the dark hair, thought

for a moment, learned that the color of the suit was not a determining factor, and then produced hat after hat, setting them on Mary's head with deft touches, her own head on one side, until at last she brought the hat, small, simple, unspeakably modish.

"I'll take that one," said Mary, with a catch in her voice.

Mattie scanned the ticket and announced, with regret, that it was worth eighteen-fifty.

"And that little snip of a hat," she added, "one rose and a bit of ribbon! It's the straw and the style. It only came in this morning, and I didn't know the price, or I wouldn't have shown it to you; it spoils everything else so when you see the real thing. But we might copy that now," she added hopefully, "in a cheaper straw——"

"No," said Mary, "I'll take that hat, and I'll wear it. And now a suit. Tell me what to get," she begged.

Mattie discoursed sagely on the styles of the day.

"Don't let them fool you into buying a last year's model. There's plenty that will try to." She outlined the essential differences. "Don't look at anything less than twenty-five dollars, eighteen anyhow. It's so early in the season that there'll be something wrong with anything cheaper. Thirty-five'll give you better styles. Good-bye, my dear. You certainly have got a nice hat."

An hour later, Mary surveyed herself in the long glasses that showed her three Marys at once. There was no vanity in her gaze, rather a sort of awe. The smart, new suit fitted to perfection over the dainty blouse that she had been told was quite necessary. The new hat would have added distinction to any costume. She turned to the smiling saleswoman, who gazed at the work of her hands and found it good.

"I can't believe it is I," she said. Then she caught sight of her worn shoes. "Oh, yes, there's a little of me

left still," she laughed, "but I'll go right out and lose it."

Shoes were disposed of speedily, and with the clerk's obsequious "Come again, madam," ringing like music in her ears, she passed out of the store. There was a mirror in the entrance, and again she caught a glimpse of herself. This time she noted her face as well. She stood spellbound, pretending to look at shoes, but stealing glances at herself. Was this the Mary Barnwell that had looked out at her from her mirror at home, the creature with tense face and strained-back hair? This was another woman, whose eyes smiled, whose soft cheeks glowed with lovely color. She gazed with a long sigh of satisfaction. She was a religious woman, and at that moment she thanked her God for clothes—"for hats, O Lord, and suits, and patent-leather shoes."

And then, quite naturally, she thought of William. She must see him at once and show him—— With a start she remembered; but her heart refused to be heavy. All the insanity of the morning had been washed away in the sweet bath of the hours that had followed. Prayer and fasting could not have exorcised that evil spirit so speedily as the wholesome sense of beauty and pride that pervaded her. She was herself again, and, because she was herself, she wanted her husband. Where was he? What had he thought when he looked back and did not find her? How had he spent the long hours of the morning? She had forgotten, actually forgotten, him, but she knew he had not forgotten her. Her poor, poor boy! He was so large, her William; he grew warm so quickly. In fancy she could see him rushing about madly in that manner peculiar to men who have lost something, with a wilted collar, and beads of perspiration standing out on his face. Had he had his dinner?

She determined to go to the family hotel where they always ate, and then home at once. Living would be mere existence until again she had the comfort of his arms, the knowledge that he loved her and found her lovely. Suppose something had happened to him; suppose she were never to see him again! And she had willfully let him be tortured by that same thought of her for hours! She marveled at the madness that had possessed her.

When, she asked herself passionately, had William ever failed her? She recalled the hours of trial they had borne together. When had she ever risen in the night, every mother sense alert at the wail of a sick child, but presently she had found William at her side, dazed with sleep, a little slow at first to grasp the needs of the case, but *ready*, always ready to bear his part? What amusement had he allowed himself these last years? Tears rose to her eyes as she remembered the smile and sigh with which he had smoked his last cigar. Whatever his reason had been for leaving her this morning, she loved him. She no longer cared especially to know. She *wanted him*—

She looked up and saw him coming toward her. William looked distinctly wild. He was very warm indeed, and his eyes had a hunted expression. He was hurrying along, scanning every woman he met. His glance fell on her, and, in the midst of all her contrition, she felt a woman's thrill that he did not recognize her. She ran after him and touched his arm.

"Mary!" he cried. "Oh, thank God! Where have you been?"

"Where have you been?" she parried.

"Back to the farm and here again. Then I went to the bank, and they said you'd been there, and I've been hunting ever since. What happened to you?" he demanded. "I've been almost

crazy." Anxiety was rapidly giving place to its twin sister, wrath.

Mary's feelings became mingled. There was a wholesome directness in William's anger of which she stood somewhat in awe. "With comical rapidity, she found herself not the accuser, but the accused. Instinct told her, however, that no man could be angry with her very long in her new clothes. She became all feminine.

"Look at me," she said demurely. "Don't I look nice?"

William relaxed sufficiently to take in the new attire and whistled.

"Gosh," he said, "but you look pretty! You look *great*, Mary! Isn't your hat a little small?" he added critically.

"My hat is just right; it's a perfect hat," said Mary, with conviction.

"I'll have to get used to it. Those little fellows don't cost so much, I suppose."

"It cost quite enough," said Mary hurriedly. Even to the most generous of husbands truth may be veiled for a season.

"That jacket's a cozy little garment, anyway," went on William. "Do those shoes fit you?" he demanded suspiciously. "They look narrow."

"I've spent just sixty-four dollars," stated Mary, "and I haven't bought a dress yet or anything for the children."

William's look was a curious mixture of satisfaction and awe.

"Well, I'm glad you've got what you want," he said, in his hearty way. "You've waited long enough, poor girl! And, anyhow, I sold enough this morning to pay for most of it. It took time, but I did it! Gee, that woman can rattle on! I'd hate to be her husband."

Mary started.

"Was she—was that Mrs. Perry a customer?"

"A customer? Of course she was a



She ran after him and touched his arm. "Mary!" he cried. "Oh, thank God! Where have you been?"

customer. Who in creation did you think she was?"

"I didn't know," faltered Mary, "that that was the way you talked to customers. You didn't look as if you were talking business."

She was a bright woman, quicker in her mental processes than William. Suddenly, with a feeling not altogether

unpleasing, she found herself looking at him as at one on an eminence.

"It's the way I talk business," said William. "Did you suppose I took orders the way a dentist pulls teeth? Now, that woman, she didn't have any idea of ordering anything this morning. She wanted to find out how to keep bugs off the roses I sold her last year.

But I sat down beside her, and, after I'd listened to all she had to say, and how she'd tried this and that, and how her cat had drunk the bug poison, I began to ask her about her yard, and, before she knew it, I'd made her think she couldn't stand another summer without some more shrubs and some young fruit trees. She gave me an order for fifty dollars just as we got to the city. And then I came back to tell you about it, as pleased as a boy, and you weren't there! Where *were* you?"

"I left the car at Victor," said Mary, in a low voice.

"Left the car at Victor! What in thunder made you do that without telling me?" demanded William. "How did you think I was going to find you? Were you sick?" He eyed her crimsoning face. "*What did you do it for?*"

"You stayed away so long," murmured Mary, "and you seemed to be having such a good time, and," desperately, "her hat was so nice. It was not," she added, with satisfaction, "half so nice as this one, though."

"Do you mean to tell me," said William, with an effort, "that you thought that I—that you were——" His wrath gave way to helplessness.

"Yes, I do!" cried Mary passionately. They had withdrawn to a side street, and no one was watching them. "I was jealous! Of course I was jealous. I wasn't *myself*. I haven't had anything new, or seen any one, scarcely, or gone to a place, even to church, for two years. You don't know the feeling, going off every morning, and I'm glad you don't. It's like prison walls. It hurts you when you breathe. It makes the very sunshine look queer to you. And then, when we had started off at last, and I was so happy in my old clothes just to be going off with you, *then* to have you leave me all the way to the city! I might have stood it if it had been a man, or if she'd been

poorly dressed, but a woman that looked as I hadn't for years, while I sat there for every one to laugh at! I was beside myself, I tell you. You just try it once and see," she ended, with a sob. "Even Jim Sherwood grinned at me and said I'd better look out!"

"Did he?" exclaimed William, with interest. "The old skate!" Then he looked down, and his expression changed. He drew his wife's hand through his arm. "Mary," he said solemnly. "Mary! Don't you know how you look to me? Do you think it's your clothes that make you beautiful? Why, every day I see women all tricked out in their best clothes, leaving their families and going off for a good time. They look pretty enough, I suppose, but they don't have faces like yours. Why, sometimes at night, when I see you wrapped up in your old dressing gown, and stooping over those little babies, never thinking of yourself, you have a kind of *angel* look. I can't tell you how I feel. I thought you knew." William cleared his throat. "Let's go out and get dinner," he added briskly. "I'm starved out, and you must be, too. We'll get the best in town, and then we'll go to a moving-picture show. Hello! Here's one now. We might come down here." He examined the garish poster with boyish interest.

"Yes, let's," cried Mary, dashing away the tears. "Oh, William!" She clutched his arm and pointed to the picture. "Oh, my dear, how funny!"

She clung to him, laughing still. In the foreground, a highly dressed female was devoting herself, after the manner of her kind, to an uninteresting-looking gentleman in evening clothes. Through a window in the background, another woman was gazing with horror-stricken eyes. She was haggard and she clasped an infant to her breast. It bore the legend: "His Two Wives."

"What's there so funny about that?" asked William, puzzled.

Another Queer Thing About Parents

By Mary Patterson

ILLUSTRATED BY V. SANDBERG

NOVEMBER 2. Mother says schools are useful, so then of course they are. But only one is really, truly pleasant and that is dancing school. Sunday school helps fill in Sunday, and has entertainments sometimes with ice cream which is never as good as ours. They get it at the cheapest place, because I saw the name on the buckets when they were throwing it into the dishes and said run away little girl. Women always get so excited when they're managing the ice cream and cake at the Sunday-school parties.



I don't like the looks of the party when it begins to be over. There is always so much melted food in the dishes they forget to take away.

On Sunday the teacher says now pay close attention, which is a funny thing to say every time. Of course we'll pay the very most close attention, when she draws our chairs all up into a tight little ring around her chair. We can't help it. I told mother once that I was going to give Miss Granger some gum with a lovely smell to it, so she could chew it when we paid close attention. Mother said why Anne whatever put that absurd idea into your head the *very* idea, and when I said her breath was often indigestionable, father roared and

mother looked the hurt-feeling way. When she doesn't approve of me, she looks down at her plate, shuts her lips tight and rolls her eyes up at us. Sometimes father roars again.

P. S. Then mother has to laugh when she doesn't want to. There are many times when parents think it is not proper to laugh before their children, and so they finish the laugh in the hall, before father goes to the office. Many times!

November 3. It doesn't make any difference what you think about plain school. There it is forever and you can't help it or change it ever. They have just as long terms as they dare and the shortest vacations. Too short to be sanitary, mind you. With all their fuss about hy-gi-ene and airing rooms and filling your lungs with pure air, they go and keep scholars months and months and then in just a few weeks send a note to the parents that school opens Monday. And you can't get out of it, so it's no matter what you think. Plain school is there always, and when you get through that, they have another ready for you not so plain, and keep holding it over your head all the time. There is



no peace from schools. Parents always say in a sad way these are the happiest days of your life, and I'm sick of it. It's the only quotation parents know.

November 4. I've saved dancing school until to-night, because it was to-day. Of course like many things we love most they manage to keep dancing school far apart, and have it only for a few minutes for a few Saturday afternoons. I begin to get ready Friday night, because when mother rolls up my hair she says now Anne if it's damp in the morning don't take your hair down but just tie a big bow on some way and leave your hair rolled up or it will come out before dancing school. So I have to look out at the weather every Saturday morning, and once when I put my head out it was pouring and I forgot to take it in because I was watching a woman hurrying along without an umbrella and trying not to get her skirts wet and grabbing and grabbing. And what do you think! My head got soaked. But I tied a ribbon around the top roll and sprawled the ends out and went that way until dancing-school time.

When mother took it down at the last minute it was queer and damp looking with a break in the middle and the ends straight like a paint brush. Such a look as then swept over my mother's face and she screamed why Anne whatever happened to your curls you must have been hanging out of the window. And I said yes but it was early this morning when I was seeing Miss Sally Stone wear white stockings with cloth shoes. Then there was awful excitement, and the tongs were brought forth. (I just love the sound of brought forth when speaking of curling tongs because it goes with iron bars and burning and



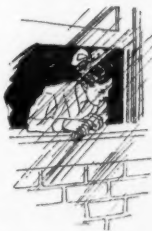
torture and history, and history is much too good for the best school that ever lived.)

The dancing teacher is pretty and she has a sweet voice. (I say blue bells to myself when she speaks.) And cunning feet and fluffy hair that curls tighter and tighter when it rains and I've had an awful time keeping mine in. I can never be a pretty dancing teacher when I grow up on account of my hair unless the fashion changes and dancing teachers with straight hair come into style.

Then she puts us in a line and spreads her hands apart and says not so close together not so close. Sometimes she says come Anne do this with me dearie and then we dance down the great big bright room over the shining floor, to the music that is perfectly beautiful. Nothing tiresome about it or hard to understand. Dance music is more musical than any other kind of music especially that mixed up with scales and motives. That's another queer thing about parents. They can't even let the manners of music alone, or morals I suppose it would be, because they're always talking about its motives. I should think they'd just let music be music. Whatever and however, the motives of dance music are good. Anybody can see that, and I dance perfectly with the teacher. You'd think I didn't need another lesson I dance so beautifully.

But boys! It's too late to begin the subject, there is so much to say, and I think more deep than I can ever say anyway.

November 7. Boys should never be allowed in dancing school until they've learned to dance. That's what I think and I'd like to write and ask Beatrice



if she doesn't think so too, only it's really very inconvenient to write what you want in a letter on account of parents. They're so afraid the other girl's parents will see my spelling they have to go over the letter first when you ask for a stamp. That's another queer thing about parents. They say that you must never read other people's letters, because letters are personal like a tooth brush, but they'll jerk *your* letter out of the envelope, and say dear how do you spell Germun, and look at that capital, and there you are. Parents are certainly hampering to secrets in letters, and I don't suppose it will be much better when I learn to spell accurately, because they get into the watching habit, and habbits stingeth like an adder.

O yes boys! Boys are made of wood and they bend slow. When they bow the way the teacher shows them with their hand on their heart, they squeak because their clothes are so stiff. They always look as though they'd been scrubbed with a brush and soap for dancing, and they smell of the soap. All boys have heavy feet, and they get red in the face counting out loud to manage their feet. And then what do you think? As soon as they learn a little bit about dancing they think they know more about it than anybody else, and begin to tell you how to do it, and I hate to speak to them. But there you are, and you can't help it and it makes no difference what you think. Mother said to father isn't it odd Anne doesn't like boys at all and there are not so many of the little girls she's really fond of. And father said you've ster-ul-lized her—and the others are natural products, germs and all and then they fell to talking and how they talked.

I've got to look up ster-ul-lized in the dictionary. I suppose it means taking care of my complexion. I'll look up natural product too. I hope there'll be a picture of it, so I can see if it

looks like those soapy boys in dancing school.

P. S. They had an awful time keeping two of them in dancing school. They had to be brought and stayed with, and one boy kicked his mother and his mother said she was so embarrassed. *She* was embarrassed, mind you, and never once said the boy was embarrassed. I didn't mind that boy so much. He was awfully upset, and he'd do or die before he'd cry. He hated everybody and felt like kicking everybody, but his mother was handiest. She told him he'd be so sorry when he was older if he didn't know how to dance with the girls and he yelled I won't.

P. S. again. I've looked them all up, and I don't see how they mean me or the boys in dancing school. But parents love to use dictionary words before their children. I don't care if they use them on me. Let them use the longest and queerest sounding they please. To humor them.

November 15. I've had no thoughts and nothing has happened until to-day and now I'm so excited I can hardly sit still to write. I'm so surprised I'd be rooted to the spot if I was standing up. Here it is. The letter. Dear Best Friend: If ever I hated you in all my life I did to-day. But I'm revenged. I found a stamp and I'm going to pore out the secrets of my sole to you and post it. It all began when my reports came home. Mother humummed and said it didn't look as if I was a bright and shining light. I don't want to be. Do you. I just want to get through. Don't you. But I didn't pass all on account of that loathesome arithmetic they keep sticking in schools. The minute they build a school they put arithmetics in every room before they move in the teachers or scrape the putty off of the windows to washem. Well there was an awful powwow about the arithmetic and mother looked the heart-

sick look and I got a choke in my throat. Finally father sailed in and things got better. He said if at first you don't succeed try try again. Of all poetry that is the very worst, but father kept on saying I would pass next time sure and that anyway it wasn't fatal. Mother kept on saying it was serious and something ought to be done and then father said what a fuss you never got your accounts right in your life you can't add—and then I didn't wait to hear the rest.



That was yesterday, and to-day there was something else. More and worse. One of mother's friends gave a little tea and told her to bring me. Of course mother said yes without asking me a thing about it. But I don't mind it sometimes. I like the sandwiches and the too rich candy and mother says it's good for manners, and I knew she wanted her friends to see my new hat. So we went. And Sandy Bates was there, because the lady who gave the tea party is Sandy's Aunt. Well, auntie said to Sandy O Sandy dear see that Beatrice has everything she wants and we went into the dining room. I saw an awful look on one side of my mother's face while she smiled and talked to Mrs. Minnock with the other side. But I said thank you and took a cup of tea. Sandy put in five pieces of lemon, and a lot of sugar so I wouldn't know it was tea. I didn't and I drank it and then he wanted to show me some snap shots he'd made and we sat down in the window seat and looked at the book he'd fixed up for auntie.

Now I don't know everything about the rest and I've got to hurry. We were looking at the book. I know that. And Sandy said, he said you're lookin slick to-day. I said that wasn't true

except on rainy days, and he said fishing? fishing? but you're a peach all right. And I said *really* and he said I love peaches to eatem and I just said you're welcome to. That's every single thing I said. Every word. And of course he is if his father buys the peaches. Now isn't he. Of course he is welcome to eat the peaches if his father buys a basket of them. Or his mother. Well, what do think. He pretended to bite my cheek, and of course it was a kiss, just a plain regular kiss at the tea party. I slapped him. I don't know why, but I did. It was the first thing I thought of, and the quickest way to be indignant. Then of course some women had to see it, and they flirtd around and said things about the children of the present generation which upset mother because she's always trying to make me different from the present generation.

We didn't stay long and mother said nothing until we got home, but the drive home was not pleasant. Then mother was waiting for father long before it was time for him to come and she told him a lot in the hall because I was leaning over the bannisters.

I knew dinner would be ruined, because mother looked sad and a sad mother always spoils a dinner even if

there's fried chicken and sweet potatoes. And ice cream. Well, they began, and what do you think? Mother went back to that arithmetic



tic again. She couldn't let it alone. Then she dragged you in. She said here she's failed to pass in arithmetic one day and on the very next behaved shockingly at the tea party I'm so dis-

couraged. Nan never had such a time with Anne her reports are all so good and her manners so well bread— Well, she went on and if you don't fail in arithmetic next time I'll never speak to you again, and we'll stop being best friends right here. If you're loyal you'll fail.

And then mother began the subject of Sandy. She said Sandy should never come near the house again and father took up for Sandy, and said there was nothing the matter with the kid why I never saw a pretty girl in my life I didn't try to kiss her and then! Well

Anne I couldn't tell you which was talking and which was crying. Vesuvius is nothing like the excitement in this house. I heard father explaining and explaining and saying he was just as interested in his daughter's manners as anybody else and mother said a great deal about never getting any sympathy, just like affliction in the family, and they kept on until father fixed it some way or other and took her to the theater and that's where they are now. Write your sole's secrets if you can find a stamp. Your Best Friend. B.

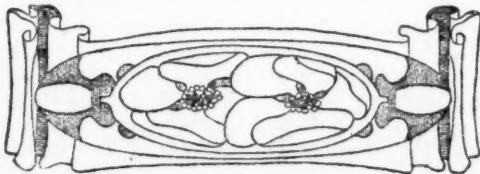
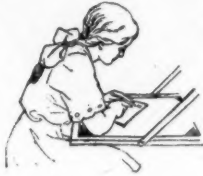
P. S. Burn this up. Promise. Or I won't speak to you again. Ever.

November 17. I had to copy all that letter because I promised to burn it and it took me so long I could write no thoughts about it. Last night I read it all over again and now to-night I'm not through being surprised. Beatrice is certainly a satisfying friend even if she does live in a distant city

and spells so well as any one can see by this letter her mother didn't see. It's inconvenient about the arithmetic. I never did fail in arithmetic. Only geography. Geography is much easier to fail in with those splotchy maps and nothing interesting. I'll tell her some time that I can be loyal in geography.

It's too bad it was Sandy she had to slap because he's the nice one she likes. But if he hadn't been nice he wouldn't have been let in to the party, and nothing would have happened. So it's fate. And there you are. It's very hard to understand some things.

Sandy was trying to be gallant and see what he got. Mother says nice boys are always gallant but they'll soon find out that it doesn't pay to be gallant, because I suppose it tore up Sandy's family too. And auntie. Just what happened to Sandy will be a mystery forever. Maybe his father and mother had to go to the theater for their nerves too. And auntie. Maybe some day Sandy will tell Trixy about the excitement at his house and she'll tell me. I can hardly wait. But I know perfectly well parents would say that Beatrice should not have allowed that about the peach and that she was excuse for slapping Sandy after all. But there you are. They are always telling you to be polite under every and all circumstances. They say it every day. Sometimes more than once. But that's another queer thing about parents. They say a thing is settled. The first thing you know they've changed it.



For a Mess of Pottage

by
Helen R. Martin



Author of "Tillie, a Mennonite Maid," "Barnabetta," "Martha of the Mennonite Country," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY R. VAN BUREN

CHAPTER XXV.

IN reply to her letter to her brother-in-law, Margaret received from him, a week later, a telegram that puzzled her greatly.

CHARLESTON, S. C.

Important Berkeley estate business brings me to New Munich Thursday, February 10th.

WALTER.

She had ten days before his coming to anticipate with some uneasiness the shock he would certainly get in making the acquaintance of her husband's sisters and in seeing the kind of home she lived in.

"If only I could dispose of that navy-blue owl on the sideboard!" she worried. "And of all that imitation onyx in the parlor. And the 'oil paintings' in the sitting room. As for Jennie and Sadie themselves! Oh, what can Walter be coming here for? I don't suppose they've discovered coal on *our* estate. I hope not, such a dirty mess as it would make! More like *our* luck to discover we don't, after all, own the place."

But she found—when she announced her brother-in-law's prospective visit—that she herself had not yet got all the shocks and surprises the Leitnells were

capable of affording her. Her Southern sentiment of hospitality received another unexpected blow in discovering that Jennie and Sadie quite seriously objected to entertaining her brother-in-law at their home.

"We ain't used to comp'ny stoppin' here," Jennie explained to her. "Danny's business acquaintances always go to the hotel. It wouldn't suit me just so well. We ain't so young as we used to be, and it would certainly be a worry to me to have comp'ny stoppin' here. You'd best not begin that kind of thing, Margaret. If your brother-in-law slep' and et here, it would mebbly give our Sadie the headache."

That New Munich hospitality, instead of being a condition of daily life as with Southerners, was so specialized an occasion as to cause the upsetting of a household and the expenditure of the nervous energy of a whole family, Margaret had come to recognize. People did not "keep open house"—they "entertained." But how was she to spring such a thing upon Walter, who knew no other standard of hospitality than that of the open Southern home? How explain to him upon his arrival

The first installment of this story appeared in the October number of SMITH'S.

that her home and her husband's was not open to him, and that he must stop at a hotel?

She had not at all solved the problem when, in a wholly unlooked-for way, it was solved for her. She was confined to bed one day with a violent headache, and was quite helpless to protect her babies from Jennie's hygienic theories, and the twins were kept by their aunt in a hot, air-tight room, such as Jennie considered their proper environment—with the result that they cried all day, and the next day had heavy colds, their first illness of any kind since their birth. But when Margaret, herself recovered, insisted upon taking them, suffering from influenza as they were, out into the chill air of a cold winter day, Jennie's thwarted will, thwarted affection, and wild anxiety for these babies of Danny's, whom she loved almost fiercely, broke all bounds, and she gave Margaret her ultimatum.

"Or either you keep those children in the house till they're well a'ready, or either I and Sadie *leave* this house where we have to look on at such croolities—and go to keep house by ourselves! Yes, this very day we go!"

Margaret paused in the strenuous work of getting little Daniel's arms into his coat sleeves, preparatory to his outing, and gazed up at Jennie with such a light of joyful hope in her eyes that Jennie, had she not been too blindly furious to see it, would certainly have withdrawn this proffered happiness from her now heartily detested sister-in-law.

"If Danny wasn't in Philadelphia to-day, I'd phone to his office, and have him *make* you ekep them in!" she raged frantically. "They'll get pneumonia, so they will!"

"Daniel couldn't make me, Jennie. I act under the doctor's orders. Daniel's a lawyer, not a physician. I'm taking the babies out to *save* them from having pneumonia."

"Daniel couldn't make you, couldn't he? Well, *I* can. Yes, and I mean what I say! You take these babies out on a day like this, when they're sick—and I and Sadie *move out this very day!*" she harshly reiterated, under the delusion that Margaret would never put her to the test. For not only was Jennie incapable of realizing Margaret's utter indifference to the economic advantage of their joint housekeeping, but it also seemed to her wholly incredible that her sister-in-law could subject her devoted and indulgent husband to the suffering he would certainly undergo if deprived of his sisters' constant ministrations.

"And when Danny comes home from Philadelphia to-night and finds us *gone*, and our half of the furniture bein' moved out, what do you think he'll say to *you* for drivin' us out?"

Margaret, realizing that she must conceal the heaven opened up to her by this unexpected ultimatum, quickly cast down her eyes that her tormentor might not see her quivering eagerness.

"I'll *goad* her to moving out!" she desperately resolved. "Oh, if only I can make it impossible for her to back down from her threat!"

She suddenly raised her eyes again, and laughed sarcastically.

"Oh, you can't scare me with your threats. *You'll* not go!"

"You'll see whether we won't! You just dare to take those sick children outside this house—and you won't find I and Sadie here when you come home!"

"That won't worry me. You'll be back soon enough. Catch *you* leaving your brother's house! Oh, no, my dear, you don't fool me for one minute. Why, where on earth would you go?"

"Maybe you don't know," put in Sadie triumphantly, "that Jennie and me *own* the nice empty house at the corner, that the tenants moved out of because we wouldn't repaper!"

"Yes," exclaimed Jennie, "we own it,



"You just dare to take those sick childern outside this nouse—and you won't find I and Sadie here when you come home!"

and it's empty; and it's all been cleaned only last week a'ready. So, then, you see if we couldn't move out of here perfectly convenient!"

Margaret's hopes rose higher, while at the same time she suffered fearful misgivings lest by some inadvertency on her part they be dashed.

"Ha!" she laughed derisively, and most artificially. "You'd never move in there, and lose the rent of that house! You can't fool me! I'm not scared. Come, baby, dear, other little arm now," she said, tugging at Daniel, junior's, coat. "Fancy your moving out—ha!"

Her utterly unnatural tone of taunt-

ing sarcasm ought not to have deceived even so slow a mind as Jennie Leitzel's. But the woman's rage dulled what penetration she ordinarily had, and she was completely misled.

"I'm not *tryin'* to fool you!" she almost screamed. "I tell you that, sure as you go out the door with those two twins, my brother, when he comes home this evenin', will find us and our furniture *gone*—never to come back! I'll prove it to you—I'll *prove* it! And we'll take Emmy along, and there'll be no dinner *for* my poor brother when he comes home!"

"Oh, yes, there will!" Margaret

laughed quite sardonically. "There'll be dinner, and there'll be two dear, devoted sisters. If you do take your departure, you'll be *back* soon enough!"

Her unnatural tones kept it up, every phrase carefully calculated to force the consummation she so devoutly wished, though inwardly her very soul was sick at the part she was playing. For deep down in her heart there was an undercurrent of pity for these poor creatures, so limited in their capacity for happiness, and yet capable of fiercely loving the babies so dear to them all, and the brother they had cherished from babyhood.

"You'll *see*, then, if we'll come back again!" Jennie hoarsely barked back at her. "Yes, you'll see! And you'll see what Danny'll—"

Margaret, having tucked the babies warmly into their coach, laughed again derisively as she wheeled them out to the porch.

"*You'll be back!* By-bye—until I see you again!"

And, with a last peal of mocking laughter, so cleverly melodramatic that she marveled at her own hitherto unsuspected histrionic talent, she disappeared.

And so the marriage of Daniel Leitzel afforded one more sensation to New Munich's not yet surfeited taste for gossip concerning their notable townsman. For when Daniel got home that evening, at seven o'clock, he found a dismantled and disordered house, no dinner, no cook, no sisters—only two sweetly sleeping babies in the nursery, and a wife with a face uplifted with a newborn happiness and peace. So deep was the serenity that had settled upon her and upon the servantless, dismantled, and disordered household, that Daniel's rage and grief, his bitter reproaches, his lamentations over the extra expense his home would now be to him, passed over her head as if they had been nothing more than the somewhat irritating cackle of an old hen.

Daniel, after a call on his sisters at their new home down at the corner, and a long and painful interview with them—in which they affirmed that unless he exercised his marital and scriptural authority to make Margaret apologize and promise that in the future she would treat them and their wishes with the consideration that was their due, they would not return to his house, though from this close proximity to him they could and would continue to see after his comforts—after this most unsatisfactory and upsetting conversation with his sisters, Daniel went to his bed very late that night, feeling, for the first time in his life, that he was abused of Fate.

But Margaret lay awake long, reveling ecstatically in the realization that now at last she had a home of her very own; two lovely babies, on whom she could expend the pent-up riches of her heart, and in whom her own highest ideals might perhaps be wrought out; a friend who deeply shared her life, and whom she could now freely bring into the sanctum of her own home. Oh, life was full and rich! She was young, she was strong, she was happy.

The husband asleep at her side was a negligible quantity in her estimate of her blessings; he was a responsibility she had incurred, to which she certainly meant to be faithful. It was not in his power to make her very unhappy.

But Margaret was, in fact, rejoicing a little too soon. Jennie and Sadie had gone out from her home, but they had not yet gone out of her life—as she was to realize later.

Daniel's anger was not modified when, next morning, he was obliged, for the first time in his life, to get up and attend to the furnace and the kitchen range. Margaret judiciously repressed her amusement at his plight.

"Oh, well, dear, you are not the only one. It's the first time in my life I ever had to get up and get breakfast," she

offered what seemed to him most irrelevant consolation.

"Marriage," she reflected philosophically, when, without kissing her good-bye, he left her to go to his office, "must be an adjusting of oneself to and an acceptance of the inevitable—Daniel being the inevitable!"

She decided, as she called up the employment office, that she needed three servants, but she did not have the temerity to engage more than one. For here was a point at which Daniel had the whip hand—he could refuse to pay the wages of those he considered superfluous, and she had no money of her own.

"As Jennie and Sadie paid half of Emmy's wages," she reflected, "it will go hard with Daniel to have to pay the maid entirely himself.

"Anyway," she rejoiced, "I shan't now have to send Walter to a hotel."

CHAPTER XXVI.

Margaret bent all her energies to readjusting the household—*her* household now—in preparation for Walter's visit, to which she could, under these changed conditions, look forward with eager pleasure. But here, again, she ran upon a snag.

"Every cloud has a silver lining," Daniel sentimentally remarked, prefatory to the discussion of the new furniture necessary to replace what his sisters had removed. "You can now have your own things sent up from the Berkeley Hill home—half of all that old mahogany, silver, rugs, books, and pictures. I couldn't afford to *buy* such valuable furniture as you've got there. And solid silver, too!"

"Strip Berkeley Hill, my sister's home! And bring those things into this house!" Margaret almost gasped. "But don't you see, Daniel, this isn't the sort of house for old colonial furniture? It would be incongruous! What this house needs is early Victorian!"

"The freightage on your things won't come to nearly so much as new furniture would cost, even though we bought the grade of stuff the girls had here; and you can tell your sister Harriet that I'll pay for the crating and packing. It isn't right that I should, for they've had the use of your things all this time, but you can tell her I'm perfectly willing to do that. Or never mind writing to her. We can arrange it with Walter when he comes."

So strong was Margaret's sentiment for Berkeley Hill that it would have hurt her as much to see its familiar furnishings in this alien setting as it would have hurt Harriet to strip her home. She did not, however, pursue the discussion with Daniel. Walter would be privately informed as to her wishes in the matter, and the places left bare by Jennie's and Sadie's departure would remain bare until Daniel saw fit to buy furniture to fill them.

Meantime, she managed, though with difficulty, to prepare with what furniture she had a comfortable room for her brother-in-law.

"If Daniel were poor, I'd feel I *ought* to help him out, painful as it would be to me to see any part of Berkeley Hill installed here. But he doesn't need to be helped out. Far from it!"

Daniel assumed Walter's visit to mean that at last this slow-moving Southerner had got round to the point of noticing his insistent demands for a settlement of Margaret's share in Berkeley Hill. So he awaited his arrival with much complacency.

Walter Eastman reached New Munich at ten o'clock one morning, and Margaret met him at the station. By the time Daniel came home to luncheon, at one o'clock, the "important Berkeley Hill business" of which Walter had telegraphed had been entirely concluded between him and Margaret—as well as several other items of importance.

"For the present, Walter, I prefer

not to tell Daniel about this news you have brought me," she suggested, at the end of their interview, which, by the way, found her rather white and agitated.

"But of course you understand, my dear," returned Walter, "that you can't keep him in ignorance of it long?"

"Of course not. Just a few days—perhaps not so long."

"Any special reason for deferring such a pleasant announcement?"

"I want to spring it on him—as a palliative, a sort of compensation, for something else that won't prove so pleasant."

"Ah, by the way," said Walter, with apparent irrelevancy, crossing his long legs, as they sat together on a sofa of the now very bare sitting room, "what was the meaning, Margaret, of all that bluff you put up on me about Western gold mines owned by a friend of yours, who thought perhaps his stepmother had a legal claim, and so forth. Quite a case you made out."

"It's a true case. I'm much interested in it. And Daniel's clerk happened to know that the land *was* vested in the stepmother's husband at the time of his death, and that he died without a will. What I want you to tell me now is this—can any power on earth keep that widow from her one-third interest in those coal—gold mines, if she claims her share?"

"No—if she has never signed away her rights."

"She hasn't done that."

"You say your husband's clerk was working on the case? Then it's the case of a client of his?"

"Yes—the case of a client of his."

"And a friend of yours, you said?"

"Yes. His clerk wasn't exactly working on it—she simply told me, when I asked her, that she knew the mining land to have been vested absolutely in the husband."

"And you wrote me that the step-

mother has not had her share because she's too ignorant to claim it, and that she's in want. That right?"

"Yes."

"I should say, then, no mercy should be shown those who have defrauded her. They should be made to pay up, especially as it was this old woman's hard labor and self-sacrifice, in the first place—so you wrote—that saved the home and land for the family."

"Tell me, Walter, dear, *how* shall the old woman set about getting her dues?"

"Simply hire a lawyer to bring suit."

"But her religion forbids her to go to law."

"Then you're stumped. Nothing to be done."

"But I've learned that sometimes the New Mennonites allow some one else to bring suit *for* them."

"Aha!" laughed Walter. "All right. Let her have her lawyer bring suit for her."

"Can he surely recover her share?"

"Surely. If all the facts you've given me are correct, her share can be reclaimed without a struggle."

"I'm certain that all the facts I've given you are correct."

"You seem to be certain of a good deal about these far-distant acquaintances, of whom I never heard, Margaret."

Margaret cast down her eyes, her face flushing. But after an instant—

"Thank you, Walter," she said. "I'm very much indebted to you. One more favor—kindly refrain from mentioning this case of the silver mines to Daniel."

"Silver mines?"

"Gold mines. Ah, here he comes now! And not a word, remember, of the news you've brought me!"

"All right, my dear."

"And as for the furnishings of Berkeley Hill—sit tight, and don't argue. Daniel always comes round to my way, in the end, but it takes a bit of time and diplomacy."

"Poor Daniel! He's like the rest of us, henpecked lot that we are!" Walter teased her. "He comes round to your way because he's got to—no escape! But if I know your Pennsylvania-Dutch Daniel, Margaret—and his letters to me have been very self-revealing—he wishes sometimes that the good old wife-beating days were with us yet."

"No, Daniel isn't like that. He isn't a bit *brutal*—at least in the sense of rough. He's very gentle, really!"

Daniel, now knowing his brother-in-law to be an impecunious, and, by Leitzel standards, rather an incapable, unimportant sort of a man, manifested in his curt greeting of him the small esteem he felt for him.

But he found, during his noon hour of respite, that his repeated efforts to talk business with this discounted individual were very skillfully parried.

"We have a pretty big bill, Eastman, against that South Carolina estate," he began, over his soup. "A whole year's rent, you know, for Margaret's half of the house, land, and furniture. But Margaret is willing to waive that—in fact, *quite* willing—and I concur in her willingness. We shan't press that. We'll let that go; especially now that you've come to settle up. If you'd waited much longer, we might not have been so willing to waive the year's rent. Eh, Margaret?"

"Please, Daniel!" Margaret murmured, hot with shame as she saw Walter's crimson embarrassment and rising anger.

"Well, of course, I don't mean," said Daniel, who considered himself a remarkably tactful man, "that Margaret would have gone so far as to bring suit. Not against her own sister, certainly. Nor would I, either, sanction such an extreme measure. But right is right, you know, and law is law."

"I've got a case on my hands," retorted Walter, avoiding Margaret's eye, "of a widow who for over thirty years

has received no rent for her third share of some mines—eh—silver mines."

"You ought to draw a big fee for a case like that!" exclaimed Daniel, his eyes gleaming. "A regular big haul—enough to set you up for life! Silver mines! Well, I should say!"

"I don't expect to get much out of it."

"You'll never get much out of anything," grumbled Daniel, "the way *you* do business!"

"Sometimes, however, business men are so extremely devoted to their own interests, to the exclusion of all human appeal and all natural ties, that their 'vaulting ambition o'erleaps itself.'"

"Ah, Shakespeare!" nodded Daniel. "Very aptly quoted. Yes, but the prudent, astute business man looks ahead and on all sides before he 'vaults.' I've never taken one hasty, ill-considered step in my life, and look at the result! I've a—*very* comfortable living," he concluded, with a furtive glance at his wife.

"The modern rule for getting rich," Walter, having quite recovered his equanimity, casually remarked, "seems to be to skin other people."

"Ah! But you go about it too clumsily, my friend!" returned Daniel, grinning. "Don't try to skin people who have all the law—and I may say all the brains—on their side."

Walter stared.

"I try to skin people?"

"Well, it wouldn't be very civil of me, would it, when you are my guest at my own table, to accuse you of trying to skin my wife and me of her half of Berkeley Hill? I hope I am a man of too much tact to commit a breach of hospitality and etiquette like that. But this I will say—"

Margaret, however, seeing her husband, to-day, with Walter's eyes, was so swept with shame that she could not endure it.

"Daniel!" she interposed, fearing



"Oh, well, dear, you are not the only one. It's the first time in my life I ever had to get up and get breakfast."

that Walter, with Southern heat, would rise and slay her husband. "Do let me enjoy Walter for one day without bothering about business, won't you? Wait until to-night to talk things out."

"As I'm obliged to get back to the office by two o'clock, I suppose I shall have to wait until this evening; but I've already waited over a year," said Daniel, glancing at Walter to note the embarrassment he expected his brother-in-law to feel at this thrust.

But Walter was, by this time, beyond feeling anything but wonder and amusement at Leitzel's conversation—with, also, a sense of consternation at his

fresh realization of poor Margaret's fate in being saddled with a "mate" like this, who, apparently, let her have none of the compensations his huge wealth might have afforded her.

"But you know," he trivially replied to Daniel's thrust, "'All things come to him who waits.' You waited pretty long for a wife, didn't you, Mr. Leitzel? And now you've got one—very much so! A hot-headed little Southerner, with ideals of chivalry and honor and honesty that I fear must make your hair stand up sometimes, you bloated capitalist! Yes, in these days, when a man marries, he finds himself very much

married, eh, Leitzel?" he inquired, with a lightness that Daniel thought extremely unbecoming under the circumstances.

"Well," he retorted irritably, "I'll admit that sometimes I do think I'm a little too much married."

"I'm afraid we've lost the art of keeping them within their 'true sphere.' They've got rather beyond us in these days, haven't they?"

"They're not nearly so womanly as they used to be," said Daniel sullenly.

"But what are we going to do about it, poor shrimps that we are? Suppose, for instance, that a man's wife has a

quixotic idea of honor—eccentric scruples about using money she thinks was not come by in quite an ideal way—what's a corporation lawyer going to *do* about it, if she sets up her will, heh?"

"There are the quite easy divorce courts," said Daniel darkly.

"But there is also alimony."

"The marriage laws of our land," affirmed Daniel, "ought to be revised."

"They will be—as soon as women get the vote," said Walter. "And then——"

But Margaret, fearing the lengths to which her brother-in-law, might go in this reckless mood, brought the talk abruptly to an end.

"It's a quarter to two, Daniel. You'll be late to your office. I'll have dessert brought in at once. And you know it always takes you fifteen minutes to say good-by to the children. It feels so grand, Walter, to refer to 'the children.' In the plural! I can't yet believe or realize it! And as for Daniel—well, he's a comic supplement, you know, about those twins!"

She rattled on, keeping the talk, during the remainder of the luncheon, away from thin ice, so that when Daniel rose to go away, the suspicion roused by his brother-in-law's remarks had been brushed aside and lost sight of; for the time being, at least.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Daniel Leitzel's marriage had revealed to him a trait in himself of which he had never before been conscious, a trait that no circumstances of his life, hitherto, had roused into action—he discovered, through his love for Margaret, that he could be intensely jealous. Any least bit of her bestowed otherwise than upon himself was sure to arouse in his heart this most painful emotion. He was jealous of her passion for books, of her friendship for Catherine Hamilton, of her devotion to the twins; and now, to-day, of her evi-

dently chummy relation with her brother-in-law. It was, then, not only his eagerness to get down to real business with Walter Eastman that made him hurry through his office work and get home an hour earlier than usual; it was also the uncomfortable jealousy he felt for Eastman, together with a return, during the afternoon, of the vague suspicion Eastman's rambling, enigmatical remarks at luncheon had roused in his mind. The fact was that some of the things Walter had said, as they kept recurring to Daniel, were growing to have a sinister significance.

To his keen disappointment and chagrin, however, he found, when he got home, that neither his wife nor their guest was in the house.

Seeking out the very capable maid Margaret had succeeded in securing, he discovered her in such a state of sulky indignation that she would scarcely vouchsafe to him a civil or intelligible answer to his inquiries.

"Where is Mrs. Leitzel, Amanda?"

"I don't know where your wife's at. She went out with that fellah," the girl replied crossly.

"Fellah?" repeated Daniel, indignant in his turn at what, even in a New Munich servant, seemed very rude familiarity.

"The fellah you're eatin' and sleepin' here," elucidated Amanda.

"Did she take the twins with her?"

"No, sir, she did *not*! She left 'em in my charge!"

"Why, then, are you not with them?" Daniel asked, in quick anxiety.

"I *was* with 'em, till them two women come in here interferin'!"

"Two women? Ah, my sisters! Are they here? Where are they?"

"Out there on the porch, wakin' up them two babies your wife left asleep—with me in charge of 'em! If them women hadn't uv been two of them to one of me, they wouldn't uv got the

chancet to wake up them twinses, you bet you!"

Daniel banged the kitchen door spitefully and started for his sisters, his sore and lacerated soul crying out for the sympathy, the consolation, their own aggrieved spirits would offer to his wrongs and worries.

He found Jennie and Sadie bending solicitously over the twins, who, roused from their regular sleep, were wailing fretfully.

"Yes, Danny, no wonder your poor babies cry!" Jennie exclaimed, as he appeared. "All alone out here in the cold, on a day like this, yet! Yes, this is where we found 'em when we come in! This is where you can find 'em most any time!"

"We saw Margaret start out walkin' with a strange young man, Danny," Sadie explained, "and we come right over to see whatever had she done with these poor babies. And this is where we found them—alone out here in the cold!"

"They wasn't alone! No such thing!" Amanda shouted from the doorway, whither she had followed Daniel. "I was right here, with my eye on 'em every minute, like missus give me my orders before she went out, a'ready! I'm a trustworthy person, I'd like you to know, if I *am* a poor workin' girl, and I ain't takin' no *insults*!"

"Nobody is blaming *you*!" Daniel snapped back at her.

"Yes, they are, too! These here two women come in here and begun orderin' me round like as if *they* was hirin' me! I take my orders from *one* missus, not from three!"

"We told her to bring the coach indoors, and she flatly refused!" cried Jennie.

"My orders," said Amanda, folding her arms and standing at defiance, "was to leave 'em out. When missus tells me to bring 'em in, I'll bring 'em in. Not *till*!"

"Amanda," said Daniel impressively, "these ladies are my sisters, and when they tell you to do a thing, you must do it."

"Do they hire me, and pay me my wages?"

"I hire you, and pay you your wages."

"Then have I got *four* bosses, yet, at this here place? Not if I know it!"

"Take this coach into the house!" ordered Daniel.

"When my missus tells me to! See?"

"Danny"—Sadie offered a suggestion—"leave me take the babies over to our house while their mother is away. The idea of her goin' off like this and leavin' these poor infant twins in the care of a hired girl that she ain't had but a week, and don't know anythin' about! Don't it beat all?"

"I'd thank you not to pass no insinuations against my moral character!" Amanda retorted. "If them twinses' own mother could trust 'em to me, I guess it's nobody else's business to come in here interferin'. I wasn't toid, when I took this place, that I'd be up against a bunch like this, tryin' to order me round, and passin' *insults* at me!"

"That will do, Amanda," said Daniel, with dignity. "Go out to your kitchen."

Amanda flounced away as Sadie wheeled the baby coach down the paved garden path to the sidewalk, followed by anxious cautions from Jennie to "go slow," and not strain her back pushing that heavy coach.

"You poor Danny!" Jennie commiserated with him as they entered the parlor together. "The way Margaret uses you, it 'most makes me sick! Even her hired girl she teaches to disrespect you! Ain't?"

"My life with Margaret is not exactly a 'flowery bed of ease,'" Daniel ruefully admitted.

"If only you hadn't uv been so hasty to get married, a'ready, Danny! You could uv done so much better than what you did!"

"But with all Margaret's faults," Daniel retorted, his pride of possession pricked by the form of Jennie's criticism, "she's the most aristocratic lady I ever met."

"Oh, well, but I don't know about that, either, Danny. It seems to me she has some wonderful common ways. I never told you how one day, when our hired girl was cryin' with a headache, Margaret went and *put her arm around her*, yet, and called her 'my dear,' and made her lay down till she rubbed her head for her! I told her afterward she could be good to Emmy without makin' herself *that* common with her."

"And what did she say?"

"Och! She just laughed. You know how easy she can laugh. At 'most anythin' she can fetch a silly laugh."

Jennie walked into the sitting room as she talked, inspecting Margaret's makeshift arrangements to conceal the gaps caused by the removal of the sisters' furniture.

"I'm awful sorry, Danny, that you'll have the expense of new furniture—when, if Margaret had treated us right, we never would uv left you. And the very day you can make her pass her promise that she'll act right to us, we'll be right back."

"I'll never get her to," Daniel pouted. "She's too glad you're gone!"

"Glad!" echoed Jennie, horrified at the idea that her act of vengeance in her sudden departure with her things—an act so fearfully expensive and inconvenient to her and Sadie—should be affording joy to her enemy.

"She was working you all the time to *get* you to go. She's half crazy with delight at keeping house by herself. I certainly can't get her to promise anything that would bring you *back*!"

"Oh!" Jennie gasped, her face almost gray from her deep sense of defeat. "But look how we took all the care of housekeepin' off of her, and how it

saved *expense* for us to live together, and——"

"She never thinks of the *expense* of anything!"

"And to think," said Jennie, her voice choked, "she feels *glad* to put you to all that *exter* expense, and she with not a dollar of her own! Och, Danny, I don't know how you take it so good-natured off of her! I can't bear to see you used so! And to think what you'll have to spend for furniture if she keeps on bein' too stubborn-headed to apologize to us!"

"Well, as to the furniture, Jennie, her brother-in-law is here, and I'm going to have him ship us the furniture that belongs to Margaret from her old home. It's very handsome and expensive furniture. Much more expensive than I could afford to buy. It's the handsomest furniture I ever saw."

"But I didn't know she had *anythin'*!" Jennie exclaimed in surprise.

"She has nothing but a half interest in a tumble-down old country place."

"And look at how lordly she wants to act to you! And to *us*, yet, that have our own independent incomes!"

They had reached the dining room in their inspection of the house, and Jennie noticed at once that the navy-blue owl that for ten years had stood on the sideboard was not there.

"Oh!" she cried, in a tragic voice. "Is the owl broke?"

"No. Margaret won't have it on the sideboard."

"Won't have it on the sideboard! And haven't *you* somethin' to say if that owl shall stand on the sideboard or no?"

"I told her you and Sadie wouldn't like it when you found she had taken it off."

"Danny," Jennie said, in a sepulchral tone, "mebby she's foolin' you! Mebby her depplig [awkward] hired girl *broke* the owl—or either Margaret broke it

herself—and she is afraid to tell you! Do you *think*, mebbby?"

"No. It's up in the garret. She told Amanda to put it clear out of sight in the garret."

"Garret! The blue-owl pitcher! But *why* don't she want it here?" Jennie demanded, in mingled anger and wonder.

"Margaret don't like that owl, Jennie."

"To spite *you* does she say she don't like it and put it in the garret?"

"I told her I would miss it, I'm so used to it."

"And don't she care if you want it on the sideboard settin', Danny?"

"She said she'd save up and buy me a cut-glass pitcher to take its place."

"Well, to think you haven't the dare to have your own owl on the sideboard settin' when you want it! Danny, we'll see once if you can't!" She suddenly strode to the door leading into the kitchen and pulled it open. "Amanda! Go up to the garret and fetch down the blue-owl pitcher you took up there."

"When missus sends me."

"Danny," Jennie appealed to her brother, "do you hear the impudence she give me?"

"Amanda," Daniel commanded, stepping to the door, "go up to the garret and fetch down that blue-glass pitcher, as my sister tells you to."

"Missus tole me to pack it away in the garret, and I done it. When she tells me to unpack it, I'll unpack it. Not till."

"Amanda," said Daniel, looking white and obstinate, "you'll go upstairs and bring down that owl, or you'll pack your things and leave this house."

"I'll leave this here house when missus sends me! I like the place, and I'm stayin' till I'm fired by *her*. Not till!"

"If you're not out of here in half an hour"—Daniel took out his watch and glanced at it—"I'll send for the police, and have you ejected."

Amanda glared for an instant.

"Well, my goodness!" she exclaimed at length. "To think of my gettin' up against a common bunch like this here, when I thought—judgin' by missus—that I was gettin' into a *swell* family, the kind I'm used to! All right! Suits *me* to go. I never worked, anyhow, at a house where they kep' only one maid. I'm used to livin' with *aristocrats*!"

She flung her parting shaft as she cast off her white apron, stamped out of the kitchen, and dashed upstairs to her room.

"Now!" Jennie triumphed, as she and Daniel went back to the sitting room, "when Margaret comes home, she'll find out how nice it is to have no hired girl, and *us* not here to cook! And her with company to supper—and the babies over at our place, where *she*—*can't*—*come*!" with a cold-blooded incisiveness. "Mebby, after all, Danny, she will wish she had us back here to keep care of things for her."

"I'd like to know," Daniel pouted, "why she stays out so long with Walter Eastman! I came home early, on purpose to talk business with him. I have several things of importance to settle up with him. I want to get through with it and see him off, for I'm in a hurry to get Margaret's furniture here, and to see what can be done with her property down there. I'm sure *I* can make it worth something. I'll get Eastman's wife to give me a mortgage on it, and then I'll——"

The banging of the front door checked him.

"They're back at last," he said.

"No; it's that sassy hired girl goin'," said Jennie, with satisfaction, as she glanced from the window and saw the girl departing with a heavy suit case.

"I guess," said Daniel, "I'll have to eat my supper over at your house, Jennie, if you'll invite me. It looks as if there wouldn't *be* any supper here. Or, if there is, it'll be late; and you know how I like to have my meals on time."



"Daniel!" she interposed, fearing that Walter, with Southern heat, would rise and slay her husband. "Do let me enjoy Walter for one day without bothering about business, won't you?"

"Of course you do! You come right along home with me, Danny, and get your nice warm supper at the time you're used to it. Emmy's makin' waffles for supper this evenin'."

"I'll leave a note for Margaret," said Daniel, going to a desk in a corner of the room. "She might be frightened if she came in and found us all gone, and no explanation."

"Leave her *be* frightened! She *needs* to worry about you, Danny!"

"Yes, but it would be bad for Daniel, junior's, milk to have her get frightened."

Jennie turned away primly. The frankness of speech upon ordinarily unmentionable topics that had seemed unavoidable since the advent of the twins was a severe strain upon her virgin sense of propriety.

"Come on, Danny! It's five o'clock,

and we eat at half past. I want for you to have your nice hot waffles right off the stove."

As they left the house, Daniel saw, a few blocks off, Margaret and Walter coming leisurely toward home, Margaret talking with eager animation, and Walter laughing in evidently keen enjoyment.

Daniel set his teeth as he whirled about and moved, at his sister's side, in the opposite direction.

"All right!" he spitefully determined, looking like an angry bantam. "I won't come home with the babies to-night until I'm *good and ready!*"

CHAPTER XXVIII.

When again, the next morning, Daniel was obliged to arise betimes and start the fires, he felt, a little regretfully, that perhaps he had been a bit hasty in dis-

charging the capable, if impertinent, Amanda.

"She was never impertinent to me," Margaret replied to his explanation as to why he had sent away her excellent maid. "And, of course, she did perfectly right in refusing to take orders from Jennie that were directly contrary to mine."

"But from me?"

"But you say you told her she must obey your sisters, even when that meant disobeying me. But there! I won't discuss it! Be sure, however, that I shall take steps to protect myself against an interference with my affairs that upsets my household. I shall instruct my next maid that when Jennie and Sadie appear, she's to stand by her job and phone for the police!"

After breakfast that morning, Daniel decided that he would not depart for his office until he had "had it out" with his brother-in-law.

But Walter's ideas as to the obligations of hospitality differed rather widely from Daniel's. As a guest in Daniel's house, he could not transact the business he meant that day to put through. So he declined emphatically his host's invitation to come with him to the sitting room to "talk business."

"At your office, Mr. Leitzel."

Daniel's insistence that it suited him better to have it over right here, "without any further procrastination," did not move Walter from his persistent refusal to discuss their affairs under this roof. He felt pretty sure that in any business discussion he might have with Daniel Leitzel he would be tempted to use language that a gentleman cannot use to his host. After the interview he intended to take his suit case and go to the hotel.

Arrived at Leitzel's private office—Daniel not at all amiable at having been forced to this second futile postponement of the adjustment that Eastman must surely realize was inevitable—

Walter stretched himself out lazily in a comfortable chair by the window, lit a cigar, and waited complacently for Daniel to open fire.

So Daniel, feeling strong in the righteousness of his cause, outlined elaborately his plan to improve Berkeley Hill and rent it for the benefit of the joint owners. Or, if Walter and Harriet preferred, he would take a mortgage against Harriet's half of the estate.

Walter heard him through without a word of comment.

"I wish," Daniel finally concluded, "to begin work on the place at once to make it marketable. Can you give me the names and addresses of any reliable contractors in Charleston?"

"Plenty of them."

"Good!" said Daniel, taking from his pocket a notebook and pencil. "Well?"

"But it is quite useless for you to write to a contractor," said Walter, blowing a long line of smoke from his mouth. "In the first place, Mrs. Eastman would not consent to mortgage away her half of Berkeley Hill; secondly, neither Margaret nor my wife would consent to such alterations as you propose—which would quite ruin the place; thirdly, Margaret wishes her sister to continue to live at Berkeley Hill."

The cool effrontery of this latter made Daniel stare.

"And you," he sharply demanded, "wouldn't you feel a little more comfortable if you paid *rent* for the house you live in?"

"But why," smiled Walter, "should my feeling in the matter interest *you*?"

"Bluff and impudence won't carry you through when I'm on the job, Eastman! You'll have to come to terms, or get into trouble. We might seize your wife's half of the estate for back rent—and then you'd have nothing. Whereas, as I propose to work this thing—"

"Your methods of working business

deals, Leitzel, are perfectly familiar to me, and I prefer to have nothing to do with them."

"You prefer to continue to live in Margaret's house without in any way compensating her! Well, I warn you I don't intend to stand for it! Since you take the stand you do, I'll make you pay rent for the past year and a half!"

"Margaret didn't tell me she had given you power of attorney over her property. I happen to know that she and my wife have a perfectly good understanding as to Berkeley Hill. It isn't at all necessary for you and me to discuss it."

"Oh, yes, it is, unless you want me to——"

"There is a much more important matter," Walter interposed, "that we need to discuss."

Daniel's sharp little eyes bored into his like two gimlets. "Eh? What?"

"The case of your stepmother's right to one-third of her husband's estate."

"What do you mean?"

"Your wife's conscience—which you will, of course, think quixotic, but which I, being of her own class and kind and country, quite understand—will not permit her to live on money obtained by the defrauding of a helpless and ignorant old woman; nor will she consent to her children's inheriting such dishonest money. I must tell you this morning, Mr. Leitzel, that you and your sisters and brother must at once restore to your stepmother what is her own, or I will bring suit for her."

Daniel, though looking white, nevertheless answered quite steadily:

"My stepmother is a New Mennonite. They do not sue at the law."

"But get others to sue for them."

"Did Margaret send for you to come up North for this?" Daniel demanded, a steely coldness in his voice and look.

"She did not send for me at all. I came to see her on quite another matter

—connected with the Berkeley Hill estate."

"Indeed? But she has given you this data which you are using as blackmail, has she—as to my father's widow, her religion, her rights, her wrongs, her ignorance, and so forth?"

"Margaret has not once mentioned to me your father's widow."

"Then what do you mean? How do you know Margaret objects to the source of my wealth. And what's your authority for all the rest of your bluff?"

"I know she objects to the source of your wealth because I know *her*—as you, Leitzel, could not know her if you lived with her through three lifetimes, since you are not, as I've already intimated, of her race or class or country. I learned all the facts—the *facts*, notice—as to the illegal withholding from your stepmother of her share of her husband's estate, entirely through surmise."

"Surmise? You surmised them! How extraordinarily perspicacious! It's rather surprising so sharp a lawyer has not made more of a success of himself, eh?"

"Your idea of success and mine would differ as widely as does your understanding and mine of your wife. To get down to business, Mr. Leitzel, you must at once restore to your stepmother her share in her husband's estate—or we bring suit."

"We? Who?"

"I—for the old woman."

"And what," Daniel asked, his lips stiff, "do you think you are going to get out of this?"

"A reasonable fee."

"Margaret authorizes you to say all this to me?"

"She doesn't know I'm saying it—has no least idea I meant to say it."

"Oh, so you are acting independently—as a counterstroke to save yourself from being forced to pay rent for the

good home you and your family enjoy?"

"I am acting independently of Margaret, anyway," returned Walter, quite unruffled.

"Margaret will forbid it!"

"If I were not taking up this case with you this morning, Leitzel, Margaret would herself, I am confident, put it into the hands of another lawyer, who might not be so interested as I am in keeping it out of the newspapers. Margaret would probably bungle the thing, and get herself into a mess of trouble. So I've decided I'd better do it for her, and do it with a minimum of fuss and worry for her."

"She has told you she was going to put it into a lawyer's hands?"

"She has told me nothing—at least she *thinks* she has told me nothing."

"What do you mean by that—that she *thinks* she has told you nothing?"

"I've said that I've *surmised* the facts I hold."

"Well, your surmises are all wrong. Margaret would not set a lawyer to bringing suit against me. She's not quite a fool! She wouldn't deliberately disgrace the father of her children!"

"She would consider, rather, her children's shame in inheriting tainted money."

"I'll have her down here"—Daniel rose suddenly, though his knees shook under him—"and put it to her, and you'll see whether she is loyal to her husband or not!"

"Wait!" Walter checked him. "You will have her here, of course, if you like. But don't you think she's been subjected to about enough unpleasantness and nervous strain since yesterday afternoon? I can give you the answer she'd have for you. You will restore to your stepmother her third, or Margaret will institute a suit to make you do it, and then—as so drastic a measure as that will make your living to-

gether rather unendurable—she will come home to Charleston with me."

"And the twins?"

"Will, of course, come with her."

"And you'll support them?" sneered Daniel.

"Margaret will be amply able to support them. She wanted to postpone telling you what it was that brought me North to see her just at this time, but I persuaded her this morning to let me tell you at once. It was this: A later will of her Uncle Osmond's has been found—in a volume of Kant's 'Critique'—giving Margaret an annual income of five thousand dollars. As the trustees of the estate had not yet begun the work of founding their free-thought college, the matter was easily adjusted.

"Uncle Osmond's change of heart, he states in a note, was brought about by a talk he had with Margaret one night, in which he discussed his will with her, and she pointed out to him that, having given to him those years of her life in which a girl might prepare herself for a career, or at least for self-support, she would, if he left her dowerless, be stranded high and dry. So the old curmudgeon drew up a new will, giving her a comfortable income, had it witnessed by two psychologists from two Western universities, who called on him one day, stuck it into a damned old work on philosophy that no one would ever dream of looking into except by accident—and so two years and a half passed by before it was discovered."

Under the double shock of being threatened in one moment with a lawsuit that would rob him and his sisters and brother of a large part of their income from their coal lands, and in the next moment receiving the joyful news that his wife was heiress to an annual income of five thousand dollars, Daniel felt weak, almost helpless.

He rallied, after a few moments, sufficiently to suggest feebly that he would compromise in the case of his step-

mother—give her a comfortable income for the rest of her life.

"For you see," he reasoned, "after all, the land was my own mother's, and my stepmother has no moral right to it."

"No use for you and me to discuss the *moral* values of anything, Leitzel," said Walter. "Our points of view, as I've said before, are too widely different. So we'll stick to the legal aspect, please."

"Well, then, look at the matter practically. My stepmother would have no use for the large income she would receive from one-third of the estate. Her needs are too simple. It would simply be wasted."

"That's a question for her, not for her lawyer. The more she has, the better her sons and daughters will treat her, I guess, human nature being what it is."

"What's more," urged Daniel, "she'd be under the necessity of making a will, and at her time of life, and in her state of health, that would worry and tax her—and quite unnecessarily. I can settle a nice income upon her that will more than cover all her simple, modest needs."

"And hold it over her constantly that she is beholden to your generosity! Your tender consideration that she shall not be worried with the making of a will does credit to your heart, but you've let her be worried for the past decade with impending starvation or the poorhouse!"

"And you want to tell me," Daniel burst out, "that Margaret hasn't talked to you?"

"Of 'a friend' of hers 'out West.' Of course I saw right through that."

"So that," said Daniel bitterly, "was what that long letter was about that I saw her writing to you one night—when she threw dust in my eyes by saying she had 'a little surprise' for me up her sleeve!"

"Aha!" laughed Walter. "Margaret always *was* cute!"

"Cute! You call it cute—to be underhanded with her own husband; to plot to rob her own children of a large part of their inheritance; to act in every possible way she can devise against my interests and those of my family? And don't you see," he tackled another line of argument, "that it will be extremely difficult to avert a public scandal if we actually make over to my stepmother all this money, whereas a compromise would——"

"The only rule I know for averting scandals," said Walter, "is to live honestly. Yes, it may cause comment, but not so much as a lawsuit would cause."

"You won't consider a compromise?"

"Not for an instant—except this," Walter added, lifting his hand: "We will waive a claim for the accrued profits of past years."

There was a long silence between them, Daniel nervously tapping his foot on the fender before which he sat, and Walter lounging back in his chair, looking so lazy and indifferent it was difficult for Daniel to believe that this man held in his hands the power to force a man like himself, rich, influential, secure, to give up a large part of his annual income.

Well, there seemed to be no use in prolonging the present interview. Daniel rose slowly to bring it to an end.

"There seems nothing more to be said, Mr. Eastman."

"But I must see this thing through, Mr. Leitzel, before I return to the South—and I've got to return soon. So you must let me have my answer not later than to-morrow. That will give you time to see your brother and sisters."

"Also time to see my stepmother, who, I happen to know, will not *permit* you to bring suit. She will consent to a compromise—and an easy one."



"I've got to return soon. So you must let me have my answer not later than to-morrow."

"You think so?" Walter smiled confidently, though on this point he did not feel confident. "But whatever your stepmother may consent to, your wife will *not* consent to a compromise. She hasn't the sort of conscience that compromises. And she considers this *her* concern and her children's. I am quite sure that if you don't make full restitution to your stepmother, Margaret will go home with me—which, from what I have witnessed of her life here, I think may be the best thing she can do."

"Her life here," said Daniel coldly, "is none of your business!"

He turned away abruptly, as if unable to bear more, and walked quickly from the room.

"And from beginning to end," said Walter to himself, as he yawned and stretched himself, "I was guessing. Wasn't absolutely sure that the case *was* Leitzel's stepmother's. Well," he concluded, as he rose lazily and strolled out of the building, "I'm enjoying my visit up here quite a lot."

But as he went through the streets to the hotel his face was very sober.

"To think of a woman like Margaret being tied up for life to a little spider like that! Why didn't I see it when he came a-courting her? Ah, well"—he drew a long breath—"I'll do my darndest to make it up to her! I'll see the poor old Leitzel woman myself, this morning. And I'll get in my good strokes *there* before Dan Leitzel gets near her."

CHAPTER XXIX.

Again New Munich was shaken to its foundations by a startling episode in the chronicles of the Leitzels—the resurrection, as it were, of their New Menonite stepmother, who took up her residence in a pretty little old stone house a few doors from Daniel's gaudy mansion—the most expensive location in the town—with the trained nurse who had taken care of Mrs. Danny Leitzel when the twins were born as her companion and housekeeper.

"What would we do without you Leitzels to keep us interested, not to say excited?" Mrs. Ocksreider remarked to Margaret, one day when she met her on the street. "I never knew they *had* a stepmother!"

"She's always lived out in the country, at their old home," said Margaret, "but we all thought she ought to be nearer to us, now that she's getting so feeble and helpless; so we brought her in town."

"You mean *you* brought her in?"

"Mr. Leitzel and I, of course."

"Did she tell you I had called on her?" Mrs. Ocksreider inquired, rather defiantly, not wholly free from an uncomfortable sense of embarrassment at the blatant curiosity that had taken her there.

"No; but I saw your card there with a number of others," said Margaret.

"You're with the old lady a great deal, aren't you? It's so nice of you!"

"I'm very fond of Mrs. Leitzel," Margaret replied.

"Well, she *is* a dear," said Mrs. Ocksreider heartily. "One of the sweetest little women I ever met! How prettily and cozily you have fixed up her house! She told me you had done it all."

"I did enjoy getting her settled near me," Margaret smiled. "She's the greatest comfort and blessing to me—to *any* one who has the good fortune to come into contact with her. I've known few people in my life so guileless, so kindly disposed toward every one. The world needs more of such souls, doesn't it—as a little leaven in the hardness and sordidness all about us?"

"Indeed we do!" Mrs. Ocksreider piously agreed. "And the dear old lady is equally fond of you, my dear," she assured Margaret, patting her arm. "She seems so *grateful* to you," she added, putting out a feeler.

"Yes?" said Margaret noncommittally.

"I see Miss Jennie and Miss Sadie going in to see her very often, too," said Mrs. Ocksreider tentatively.

"Oh, yes, every day. They're very attentive to their mother," Margaret replied, quite soberly.

"Are they so fond of her, too?" Mrs. Ocksreider asked, curiosity fairly radiating from her ample countenance. "I had never in all these years of my acquaintance with them heard them so much as refer to their stepmother."

"But you were never more than very formally acquainted with them," Margaret returned, in a tone that dismissed the discussion. "Has Miss Ocksreider got back from New York?"

"No. I expect her to-night. Come in to see her, Mrs. Leitzel. She adores you! And so few of us see anything of you at all since your babies came. You don't go anywhere any more, do you? Society certainly does miss you."

"You're very kind to say that. I'm very much tied down, of course."

"If you could get a good, capable nurse?" suggested Mrs. Ocksreider, again tentatively.

Margaret did not know that the town was agog at the fact that, rich as Danny Leitzel was, his wife kept no child's nurse for her babies.

"I'm trying to get one, Mrs. Ocksreider."

"If I hear of one, I'll send her to you. Of course you were at the luncheon yesterday, however? *Every* one was at *that*!"

"What luncheon?" asked Margaret vaguely.

"*What* luncheon? She asks what luncheon!" exclaimed Mrs. Ocksreider, casting up her eyes in horror. "The missionary jubilee luncheon, of course."

"Oh!" cried Margaret, blushing, for this missionary jubilee luncheon had been an orgy of religious sentimentality, in which the entire town had united, and nothing else had been talked of for weeks. "I'd forgotten all about it. I wasn't out of the house yesterday," she added apologetically.

"But didn't Miss Jennie and Miss Sadie tell you? I remember seeing *them* in the throngs."

"They didn't speak of it," replied Margaret, not adding the information, for which Mrs. Ocksreider yearned, that they did not, these days, tell her anything, since they "did not speak as they passed by."

"But, Mrs. Leitzel," pursued Mrs. Ocksreider, "how *could* you forget a thing like our missionary jubilee, unless you were deaf, dumb, and blind?"

"Miss Hamilton never spoke of it to me—and I don't see many other people. The truth is," Margaret owned up, "she and I weren't specially interested in it."

"Oh! Why not?"

"Well, I'm inclined to think that the so-called heathen religions are, in most cases, as good as, or better than, the sub-

stitutes offered by half-educated missionaries."

"Half educated!" Oh, but our missionaries are not half educated, Mrs. Leitzel!" exclaimed Mrs. Ocksreider, shocked. "Do you know, sometimes I think you are not religious? And one of the women missionaries said yesterday that a woman without religion was like a flower without fragrance, or a landscape without atmosphere."

"Epigrammatic," nodded Margaret, undisturbed. "I doubt whether she thought that up herself."

"Oh, but she was a beautiful speaker! I only just wish you had heard her! You believe, at least, in a Supreme Being, don't you, Mrs. Leitzel?"

The absurdity of such a discussion on the sidewalk was too much for Margaret's gravity, and she laughed helplessly. But Mrs. Ocksreider looked so grieved over her that she sobered up, and answered:

"I hope I have a religion."

"What *is* your religion, Mrs. Leitzel?"

"Well, I have ideals. Any one with ideals is religious."

"Is *that* all the religion you have?"

"It's more than I can manage to live up to—and we'd better not have *very* much more religion than we can live out, do you think so?"

This was rather too deep water for Mrs. Ocksreider, and she changed the subject.

"Oh, well, every one has to settle these questions her own way. I should think," she added quickly, evidently not willing to miss her chance of clearing up a matter that was in her mind, "that Miss Jennie and Miss Sadie would be rather jealous of their mother's devotion to you. She talks so much of you, and she never speaks of them."

"I'm new, you see," said Margaret, starting to move on as she felt the ice getting thin. How these New Munich women could pry! "Good-by." She

nodded, and hurried away before she could be further sounded.

"I don't wonder, though," she thought, on her way home, "that people are curious and suspicious. How Jennie and Sadie can have the face, after years of cruel neglect of their mother, to lavish upon her, now that she has a fortune to will away, such obsequious and constant attention and devotion! Oh, it's nauseating! And their mother isn't a fool! She's not taken in by it for one minute. I can see that."

The next morning, when she ran in to see Mrs. Leitzel for a minute, she found her concluding a strictly private interview with her New Mennonite preacher and a young lawyer of the town whom Margaret knew by sight.

"Don't tell Danny what you seen here, my dear, will you?" the old woman asked nervously, when they were alone. "Danny would take it hard that I got another lawyer to tend to my business. But you see, Margaret, I am afraid Danny would lawyer my money all off of me if he got at it."

"I'll not say a word to him," Margaret reassured her.

"Jennie and Sadie—and Hiram, when he comes to see me, now, once a week—worries me so to make my will," Mrs. Leitzel continued, in a distressed voice. "Hiram told me Danny's got so much more'n what he has, and you got more'n what his Lizzie has; so I had ought to leave what I got to *his* children. And Jennie and Sadie says they can't hardly get along since they had to give up so much to me, and I had ought to leave it to them when I die, because Danny's got a plenty to do with a'ready, and a rich wife, yet, and Hiram lives so tight he don't *need* more'n what he's got.

"And, anyway," Jennie says to me, 'of course I and Sadie would will all we have to Danny's and Hiram's children. You could even make your will so's we'd *have* to, mom.'

"And then Danny, he comes in, and he says: 'You know, mother, it was my wife that has been so kind and generous to you, persuadin' us all that even if the coal lands did belong, in the first place, to my own mother, we ought to give you your share. It was *Margaret* that wouldn't leave us put you in a home, where Hiram and Jennie and Sadie were all for puttin' you. And I listened on Margaret, mother, and wouldn't do it. So I don't think it would be more'n right for you to leave your share of my mother's estate to *me*, seein' it was through my wife that you got any of it.'

"Well, Margaret, they all kep' worryin' me so that now to-day I did make my will, oncet. Now I can say to 'em, when they ast me about it, that my will is made a'ready."

"It's too bad that you should be worried about it so!" said Margaret sympathetically.

"Even Hiram's Lizzie comes to see me and asks me about my will, for all I think it's Hiram puts her up to it. She don't *want* to do it. I took notice a'ready, my dear, you are the only one of 'em all that never spoke nothin' to me, yet, how I was a-goin' to will away my money."

"We have more interesting things to talk about, haven't we? I've run in this morning to tell you that Mary Louise has beat Sonny cutting teeth. She has *two*—and he hasn't one, the lazy fellow! I'll wager, *grossmutter*, she'll keep ahead of him straight through life!"

"But Sonny's anyhow fatter'n sister," maintained the proud grandmother, between whom and Margaret there was kept up a constant play of favoritism as to the babies.

"Jennie says I'm letting Sonny get too fat, and that it's dreadfully unwholesome."

"Sonny *ain't* too fat!" the jealous grandmother retorted indignantly. "He's very neat!"

"If he would only draw the line at being 'neat'! But he's getting a tummy like an alderman's," Margaret anxiously declared.

They laughed together over the joke, and the old woman looked up fondly into the bright, sweet face at her side.

"You always cheer me up, dearie, when you come. The others never talk to me about *nothin'* except how I'm a-goin' to make my will and how I'm spendin' so much of my income and how extravagant *you* fitted up this house for me with money that was rightly *theirs*. And oh, my dear, I get so tired of hearin' about the money off of 'em! The only other thing they ever want to talk about——"

She stopped short and closed her lips.

"Is the wicked, designing Jezebel that Danny has for a wife! Oh, yes, I know. It's too bad, my dear, that they should fret you so! But perhaps, now that you can tell them your will is made, they'll stop teasing you. I'm going to bring the babies in to see you this afternoon. I must run along now. I have to go downtown and get Sonny some new booties. He chewed up the last pair, and they didn't agree with him."

Again the old woman laughed delightedly. Margaret could not realize what a refreshment and comfort she was to her.

"But before you go, Margaret, I want to ask you what Hiram means by this here postal card I got off of him this mornin' in the mail."

Margaret took the card offered to her, and read:

D. V., will come to see you Saturday to read the Scriptures with you and have prayer with you. In haste, your affectionate son,
REVEREND HIRAM LEITZEL.

"I don't know who this D. V. is that's comin'," said Mrs. Leitzel anxiously. "Do you, my dear? And I haven't the dare to hear religious services with a

world's preacher. It's against the rules of meetin'."

"'D. V.' stands for two Latin words, '*Deo volente*'—God willing. Hiram means *he* will be here, God willing. I hope, for your sake, God won't be willing!"

"Oh, but ain't you and Hiram got the grand education!" exclaimed Mrs. Leitzel admiringly. "Well, if he does come, I can't leave him have no religious services with me. Us New Mennonites, you know, we darsent listen to no other preachers but our own, though I often did wish, a'ready, I *could* hear one of Hiram's grand sermons. They do say he can stand on the pulpit just elegant!"

Margaret kissed her—without comment upon Hiram's greatness as a preacher—and came away.

She was sincerely sorry that Daniel's sisters must, in the nature of things, continue to regard her with bitter antagonism. She could have borne it with perfect resignation if circumstances had not constantly brought them together, for Jennie and Sadie came almost daily to her home to look after their brother's little comforts and to fondle his precious babies for an hour, though they never in their visits deigned to recognize Margaret's existence. They would sail past her in her own front hall, without speaking to her, and go straight to the nursery, or to Daniel in his "den."

Having been the means of depriving them of some of their income, she was unwilling to take from them also the pleasure they had in the babies. So, beyond a mild suggestion to Daniel that he might tell them they must treat her with decent courtesy in her own home or else stay away from it, she did not interfere with their visits, though she tried to keep out of their way when they did come.

Daniel, on his part, was aghast at



She found her concluding a strictly private interview with her New Mennonite preacher and a young lawyer of the town.

the bare suggestion of further endangering his children's inheritance by telling his sisters they must be civil to his wife in her own home or stay away. He considered Margaret's sense of values hopelessly distorted.

It was not surprising that Margaret and old Mrs. Leitzel turned with infinite relief from the society of the rest of the Leitzels to find in each other an escape from a materialism as unsatis-

fying to the soul's true life as ashes to the palate. It was of the babies they talked mainly—of their cunning ways; of Margaret's plans and ambitions for them; of the new clothes she was making for them; of Daniel's devotion to and pride in them.

Mrs. Leitzel, in her turn, would relate by the hour anecdotes of her past life, some of which proved very illuminating to Margaret as to the Leitzel

characteristics, and gave her much food for thought.

"I used to have so afraid to be all alone. I can't tell you what it is to me to feel so safe like what I do now, with this here kind Miss Wenreich takin' care of me; and not bein' afraid to take a second cup of tea when I feel fur it, because *now* when my tea is all, I kin buy more; and havin' no fear of freezin' to death if my wood gets all fur me and I not able to go out and chop more; and not bein' forced any more to eat *only* just what would keep me alive. To have now full and plenty and to feel safe and at peace—and to have you to love me! And the dear babies!"

Margaret often marveled, as she found herself deriving the keenest pleasure from old Mrs. Leitzel's happiness and deep content, how the Leitzels could so blindly miss, in their selfish materialism, the true sources of joy in life.

CHAPTER XXX.

When, a year after she had moved into town, old Mrs. Leitzel died, it was Margaret's private conviction that the Leitzels had worried her to death trying to find out how she had made her will. It is said that people of mild temper are usually obstinate, and the fact remains that no one of them had ever succeeded in getting from the old woman the least hint as to the disposition she had made of her large property.

"She would tell you," Daniel used to urge Margaret to find out the coveted secret.

"But I don't care to know."

"I do. Find out for *me*."

"Not for any consideration on earth or in heaven, my dear, would I lift my finger about a matter that is so absolutely Mrs. Leitzel's own private and personal concern and no one else's."

The suspense and impatience with which, after her death, they awaited

the reading of the will seemed to let loose every primitive animal instinct of covetousness, and scarcely could they restrain within decent bounds their fierce suspicions of each other and their hawklike greed for the prey at stake.

When it was found that, after a bequest to the New Mennonite denomination, and one to the nurse, Miss Wenreich, the entire remainder of the fortune of the deceased was left unconditionally to Margaret, the sensations and sentiments of the Leitzels were dynamic. Even Daniel was more chagrined than pleased. An economically independent wife, he had already found, was not the sort of whom Petruchio—who expressed Daniel's idea exactly—could have said:

I will be master of what is mine own.

She is my goods, my chattels; she is my house,

My household stuff, my field, my barn,

My horse, my ox, my ass, my anything;

And here she stands. Touch her whoever dares!

One couldn't maintain the Petruchio attitude—which was certainly the true and orderly one—toward a wife who had a large income of her own and was strangely lacking in a proper respect for her husband.

It was not until Daniel discovered that Margaret had scruples about accepting the money that he found himself as fearful lest it should pass out of his family into the hands of strangers as he had hitherto been eager to get it into his own hands. The pious and solemn arguments he employed to convince her of her duty in the matter, far from having any weight with her, rather confirmed her in her feeling that, having forced the Leitzels to give up a third of their possessions to their step-mother, it put her too much in the light of a self-interested plotter to have the money come eventually to her.

It was, however, Catherine Hamilton who convinced her that she could justly keep it.

It was a trial to Catherine to be obliged, when speaking of the Leitzels to Margaret, always to curb her tongue to a hypocritical form of respect for them, for Margaret would not countenance any reflections upon them. So Catherine's remarks, in the present instance, though clearly conveying her meaning, were veiled.

"Do you think, Margaret, that the Leitzels, *for their own spiritual discipline*, ought to lose or get that money? Was old Mrs. Leitzel right or wrong in willing it away from them? Will you be wronging or helping their immortal souls—if they have any," Catherine ventured rather fearfully to add—"if you give it back to them? Another thing—you have already learned enough about married life to know that only in economic independence can a woman have any moral or spiritual freedom, can she be a personality in herself, distinct from her husband's. With all this money of your own, you will be free to control the education of your children, as you could not if your husband's money had to pay for their education."

"Of course, in most cases, I suppose, mothers and fathers have no difficulty in agreeing perfectly about their children's education. But when they differ radically, what a boon to a conscientious mother to have means at her command to do for her children what she thinks essential for their welfare in life! My dear, it's the solution of the whole confounded woman movement—that women shall be freed from an economic slavery which balks their efficiency as mothers, as citizens, and even as wives.

"Also, with all this money of your own, think what you can do to help me capitalize and organize my ideal school for girls! Why, I can begin next week!"

"And we *will* begin next week! I've thought of another thing—I can now

use the money Uncle Osmond left me to help educate Hattie's children. She and Walter are the sort that will never be affluent. They care too little about money ever to acquire any."

"And you can have an automobile of your own in which you will now and then take my mother out for an airing, to her great benefit," Catherine added.

"It shall be at her disposal," declared Margaret.

Another thing had occurred to her while Catherine had been speaking. Daniel, she knew, would never allow her a just portion of his wealth for the upkeep of their home and the rearing of their children. Every dollar of his that she spent would have to be discussed and argued about. This fortune which Mrs. Leitzel had left to her was really only her fair share in her husband's possessions, which she could use freely and quite independently of him.

When once she was convinced that she was justified in keeping the money, the frenzied raging of the Leitzels affected her not at all, though Hiram's fury and agony carried him to the length of telling her to her face that she was stealing the money—his own mother's money—from *his* children to give it to her own son and daughter.

As for Daniel, his chagrin over his stepmother's will swung round, in the end, to a chuckling glee over his wife's cleverness.

"After all, Margaret, you *have* some business ability! I declare you outwitted us all with the cute way you managed to get things into your own hands. That wasn't a bad deal, my dear—not at all a bad deal—and I shouldn't have supposed you had it *in* you. You seemed to care so little for money. And to think that all the while you were working such a clever scheme as this! Well! I knew, when I decided

to marry you, that you weren't stupid. I trust Daniel, junior, will inherit the joint business acumen of his mother and father. He'll be some business man if he does, won't he?"

"God forbid!" was Margaret's reply, which Daniel thought quite idiotically irrelevant. But he was ceasing to try to understand what seemed to him his wife's inexplicable inconsistencies.

He even came, in time, to submit without fretting to Margaret's ideas of running a household, finding her innovations, which had at first seemed to him madly extravagant, as necessary to his comfort and convenience as to hers. But he never did get so used to them as to cease to feel an immense pride in what Jennie and Sadie called "Margaret's tony ways." He always covertly watched the faces of guests in his home—for they had guests now—to note wonder and admiration at the elegance of its appointments—the formal service at meals, the dainty tea

table brought into the parlor every day at five, and the many other fastidious trifles Margaret introduced into their daily life.

It is to be noted that though the intimacy of Catherine and Margaret continued throughout their lives, Catherine never once found courage to put to her friend and confidante the question to which she could not, in her knowledge of Margaret's character, find any answer: "What in the world was it that ever induced you to marry Daniel Leitzel?"

It was only through motherhood—which was to Margaret her religion—that she learned, among other great lessons, how mistaken she had been in selling herself for a home. And the paramount ideal that she always held up to her boy and girl, as the foundation of everything that was worth while in life, was the highest conception of mated love that she could possibly give them.

You have enjoyed "For a Mess of Pottage," but the end is here and we must say good-by to a number of people whom we have grown to know and love in recent months. We have good news, however. Another great story by Helen R. Martin is to start in the April number—the next number but one. It is called

"OSTRACIZED"

It is an absorbing story and there will be an important announcement regarding it in the next—the March—issue of Smith's.



A-waiting for Me

By Wallace Irwin

ILLUSTRATED BY HY. MAYER

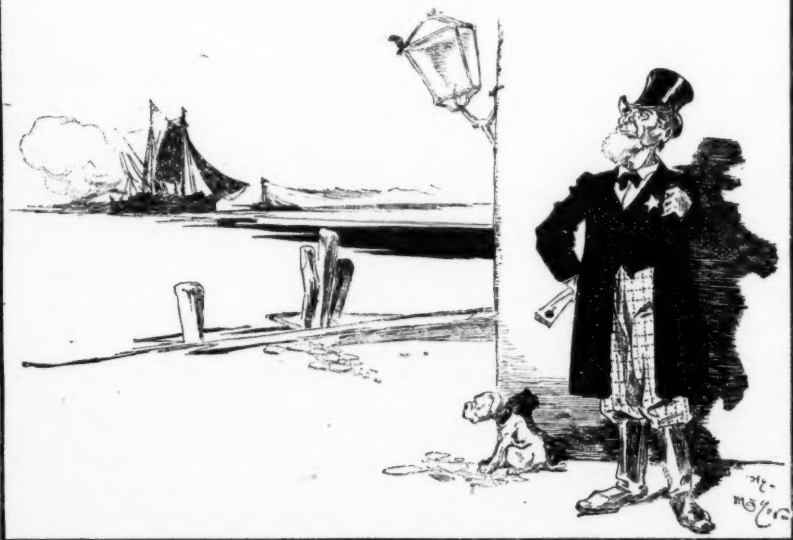
A SENTIMENTAL sailor,
He gazed across the sea.
"There's a candle in the window
A-waitin' for me.
Ye can see its light a-shinin';
It flickers yellow red
To welcome home the wand'rer,"
The tender sailor said.

"There's a good wife in the kitchen,
A-waitin' for me.
With emotion she is twitchin'
Her sailor boy to see.

On the stove's the old home poker,
On the shelf the rolling pin
To beckon back the sailor
When his gallant ship comes in.

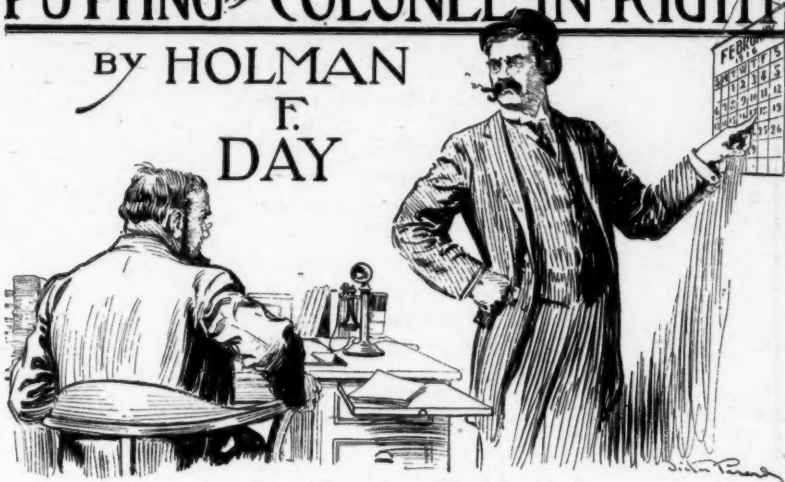
"There's a sheriff in the woodshed,
A-waitin' for me;
And yon candle, if it *could* shed
Its distant light on he,
Would reveal the crisp subpcena
What he carries in his fist
To accuse with misdemeanor,
Callin' me a bigamist.

"There's a candle in the window,
A-waitin' for me.
I've done the best I kin do
To keep me ship at sea—
For I dearly love the ocean,
With its cold, wet, watery roar.
It's this gittin' in *hot* water
That I hate about the shore!"



PUTTING ^{the} COLONEL IN RIGHT

BY HOLMAN
F.
DAY



ILLUSTRATED BY VICTOR FERRARD

OLD Showman Hiram Look enjoyed all the privileges of an intimate friend in the office of the high sheriff of Cuxabexis County—and, furthermore, he was never bashful about utilizing those privileges.

The sheriff was going through his morning's mail, and the accredited friend smoked his fat cigar and rocked lazily in an armchair.

When Sheriff Sproul snorted contemptuously and fired one letter into the wastebasket with great vigor, Mr. Look—blandly exercising friendly prerogative—arose, went over, and picked it up. He straightened out the crumpled ball of paper and read this:

Will high sheriff kindly note: There will be a bloody tragedy in the square of Sunhaze Village on Thursday next, at ten of the clock in the forenoon. The affair will take place between Treadwell Block and the Belle Haven Hotel. The sheriff will govern himself as he sees fit under the circumstances noted.

(Signed)

VENGEANCE.

"Well, what are you going to do about Old Man Vengeance?" asked Hi-

ram, after he had perused the epistle and had looked upon the back of the sheet to make sure there was no further information.

"Nothing."

"Going to stay away from a tragedy after it has been fully billed, day and date mentioned, and all preliminaries attended to?"

"There ain't going to be any tragedy."

"Is that guesswork, or have you got word that the booking has been canceled?" asked the old showman.

"Do you think I'm going to up killick and ratch around over the country every time some crazy man writes me a letter?"

"This letter," stated Hiram, slapping the sheet with the back of his hand, "ain't written crazy-man style. It doesn't ramble. It puts facts direct, without any waste of words. It's as clear cut and to the point as my billing of Look's Leviathan Circus and Menagerie. Day, date, and exact location of the grounds—no postponement on account of weather."

"I'd make a nice spectacle of myself—running up there to Sunhaze and sitting on that tavern porch—probably with advance word given out by that humorist as to what I was there for! Now don't bother me! I'm busy with some letters that deal in common sense."

"I'm a student of men, as well as handwriting, and this letter is more important than any of that mollygubble stuff about writs and attachments," insisted Mr. Look. "This letter, taking the sloping of the lines and the end strokes of the pen, has been written by a man—"

"Why don't you go into a clairvoyant trance, and tell me what kind of whiskers he wears, and whether he has rheumatism and ingrowing toenails?" demanded the caustic sheriff. "I'd believe your trance just as much as I'd believe anything you know from a man's handwriting."

"In behalf of citizens and taxpayers, I'm going to demand that you be present when this thing is pulled off," declared Hiram.

"Are you ever going to quit sticking your beak into my official business?"

"Not so long as you show that you need somebody to prod you up to the bigger duties of your office. You're too apt to be matter of fact and too cut and dried, Aaron. I suppose that hagg-back cautiousness comes of your sea-captain experience. You ain't naturally a detective. Good detectives and up-to-snuff police officers never let a tip slide by 'em. No matter how queer it sounds, they follow every tip. You've got to get busy on this one."

"I'll appoint you special officer, and you can go and tend to it," said Sheriff Sproul, with sarcasm. "And whilst you're up there, with time on your hands, waiting for Vengeance, whoever he is, to start his bloody work, you might investigate for me why old Marm Appleby's bread didn't rise the last time she set it; and you may be able to lo-

cate one or two witches and catch a dooblestrabber."

"I'll take the appointment," stated the unperturbed Hiram. "It's lucky you've got a close friend who can always step into the breach and protect the name of the office. I know duty when I see it."

"And I know your inquisitiveness, and just how bad it itches," returned Cap'n Sproul, favoring his friend with an unamiable stare. "You chased curiosities so much in the circus business that you've never got over the habit."

"Probably not—but it's a habit that keeps a man awake. And the worst thing that can be said about an officer of the law is that he's asleep all the time."

"Referring to me?" inquired the sheriff balefully.

"Not especially, seeing that you have just appointed a good man to represent you." Hiram went across the room to the big calendar on the wall and ran his finger along the lines of figures. "This is a Monday. Act is billed for Thursday. I'll get there early, and hold down a reserved seat close to the side of the ring."

And he carried out that promise, with great interest in his mission.

The reserved seat was a chair on the porch of the Belle Haven Hotel. That porch commanded a clean view of the little square of Sunhaze Village, which Hiram found to be a small community among the hills, in a remote corner of the county.

He arrived late on Wednesday night, in a hired conveyance, and he found the tavern bed soft and the breakfast bountiful. His business he kept sedulously to himself.

At nine o'clock in the morning he took his seat on the porch and lighted a big cigar and put his feet on the rail.

"Now let the grand entry come on. I'm ready for it," he informed himself. "Whoever old Vengeance is, he has got a good day for his tragedy."

The landlord of the tavern, who was plainly much impressed by his guest's plug hat and general demeanor, came out on the porch, and ventured to sit down beside this eminent gentleman, who stuck out so prominently in that matter-of-fact landscape.

"If you want to use a room to spread out your samples, you can have the parlor," proffered the host, plainly probing to discover the business of the stranger.

"I don't carry samples," returned Mr. Look, with curtness.

"No, I noticed you don't. That's the grocery store across there, in case you're visiting that line of trade."

"I'm not," stated Mr. Look, with decision.

The landlord sighed, and overended a sizable nubbins of tobacco, seeking a likely corner for a bite. After he had stowed his consolation in his cheek, he sighed again, and there ensued ten minutes of silence, devoted to the consumption of tobacco by smoke and slow rumination. Mr. Look had settled himself so comfortably that it became evident to the host that this plug-hatted gentleman was not driven by the prod of commercialism.

"Was your breakfast vittles all that you expected 'em to be?" queried the landlord solicitously.

"A one."

"This is a nice, quiet place for a rusticator to spend his vacation."

The host was still fishing.

"I ain't on any vacation."

"I hoped you might be, this being such a nice, quiet place."

"It is a quiet place, this village, is it?"

Mr. Look was doing a little digging on his own account.

"Peaceful as the grave. Always is."

Across the way, a few stolid old codgers were whittling, ranged along benches in front of the stores. Two horses dozed with heads over a hitch rail. The general appearance of Sun-

haze bore out the tavern man's statement.

"Any desperate characters in town?"

"Not to my knowing."

"Don't have anybody that gets on the rampage once in a while?"

"Well, once in a month or so old Anse Brickett gets tea-ed up on hard cider, and stands round and giggles like a tormented fool till somebody leads him home. But he don't ever do any harm except hoot."

"Ain't looking for anybody to break out, are you?"

"If you're one of the kind that's hunting for excitement, I reckon we haven't got anything to offer," said the host, showing a little irritation. "We pride ourselves on being quiet and law-abiding and minding our own business."

"Ever have a good, bloody murder in town?"

"Of course we never did!" The landlord flashed an indignant side glance from under his puckered eyelids. "There ain't a person in this town who would kill a bug except the bug walked up and bit him."

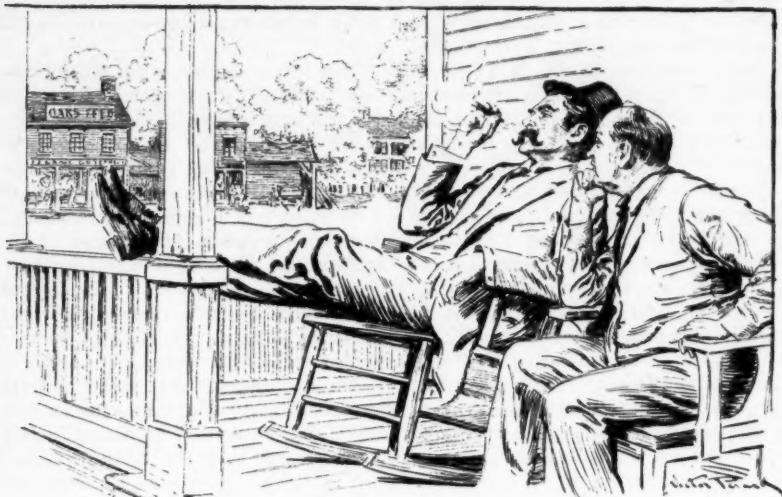
"I don't suppose it would please the town to have a murder, even if the affair did stir things up a little?"

"You're a pretty deep joker, ain't you? I suppose you'll be asking me next whether our minister opens evening prayer meeting by dancing a 'jig. Well, I can hold my temper, and say that this ain't that kind of a town, mister."

He surveyed Mr. Look with some suspicion. This man who did not sell goods, and yet was not enjoying a vacation, and who wanted to discuss such outrageous topics, was a proposition that stirred all his lively curiosity. He took a long breath.

"If you're so minded, you can tell me what business you're on, and maybe I can help you."

"I'm not so minded," rejoined Hiram, with even more curtness in tone.



"Ever have a good bloody murder in town?"

Then there was longer silence between them.

Mr. Look entered upon a more prolonged scrutiny of his surroundings.

Directly across the square was a large brick structure, which was untenanted. The upper windows were dust incrustated, and "To Let" signs advertised the emptiness of the two stores on the street floor. In a niche in the block's façade was set a life-size granite statue of a man who stood in a stiff pose of self-consciousness, with a plug hat held in the crook of his arm. Above him, a granite tablet heralded: "Treadwell Block. Erected by Colonel Dominicus Treadwell."

"Gent yonder must have had a positive dislike for himself, judging from the statue he left behind," suggested Mr. Look.

"Got your eye on 'Treadwell's Folly,' have you? Well, I don't blame you for looking at it. All strangers do. If this wasn't a peaceful and law-abiding town, we'd blow the blamed thing up and get rid of that cussed scarecrow up there!"

"Not a popular gent, then, before he died?"

"He ain't dead. That's Dom Treadwell. He has failed in everything he ever undertook. Everybody who hired rent in that building failed. The bank foreclosed and took it, and now we trustees wish 'it would burn down so that we could get the insurance. Can't get a cent out of the thing. It's hoodooed. If Standard Oil opened an office there, they'd fail inside of a year. It would come from having anything to do with any proposition that Dom Treadwell was ever interested in."

"A crook, is he?"

"No; it's his blasted luck. He can't help it. Well, there's one comfort. He can't lose any more. He has lost it all."

It did not seem to be profitable to pursue the subject of a man who had sunk to that estate of nothingness, and Mr. Look lighted another cigar and resumed his contemplation of the scenery. It was a tame occupation. The tethered Dobbins blinked and dozed, and the old men whittled. After a time, Hiram

looked at his watch. The hands were nearly at the hour of ten. Five minutes to wait, according to the "billing," as Hiram termed the warning letter. It occurred to him that possibly Cap'n Sproul was a better judge of rural jests than his deputy.

A peculiar turnout that hove in sight up the street did not tend to encourage Mr. Look in his anxious hope that something was going to come out of this affair. He acknowledged to himself that he did hope. It seemed to be up to him to produce something for an exhibit after what he had said to the high sheriff. The something that had hove in sight was interesting, even if it did not seem to be important. A horse and a heifer, hitched abreast, were drawing a wagon, and an old man drove them.

"Speaking of old Dom, that's his twin brother, Dornty Treadwell," volunteered the landlord. "Property was left to 'em equal, but Dom took whole charge, because he had the education, and could make Dornty believe the moon was made of beeswax; and when old Dornty woke up, a few years ago, the property was all gone."

The old man pulled his hitch to a standstill in front of Treadwell Block. He fumbled under the seat of the wagon, and then stood up, with a big rock in each hand.

"He always does that since he has found out," explained the landlord. "Comes into town every Thursday, arriving at ten on the dot. Comes to swap his eggs for pork and potatoes. Always stops and heaves two rocks at his brother's statue."

The old man was poisoning himself to take careful aim.

"Thought you said this is a calm and peaceful town?" objected Hiram.

"We don't pay attention to a little thing like that. I'd throw rocks, if I had been robbed the way he has been."

Dornty Treadwell launched one rock,

and it struck the statue squarely on the nose.

"His aim is getting better all the time—he has had a lot of practice," averred the landlord admiringly.

While the second rock was still in air, on its way, one of the dusty windows of the block was thrown up with a bang, and the double of the statue, plug hat on head, aimed a gun at his brother and discharged both barrels.

The horse and heifer plunged and ran, and old Dornty Treadwell fell over the seat and lay on his back in the bottom of the tossing wagon.

"He has killed him!" roared Hiram Look. "That's what I'm here waiting for! That's murder! That's the bloody tragedy! It's what the letter promised! It was signed 'Vengeance'! That man with the gun wrote it!"

Mr. Look was stamping up and down the porch, apparently at a loss how to act in the emergency. The landlord listened, and looked at him, taking his interested gaze from the horse and heifer and wagon after the outfit had disappeared around a corner.

"A letter, eh? So he wrote a letter! Well, that ain't surprising. Dom has been threatening to shoot Dornty for three years."

"And you coots wait around and let a thing like that be done, do you?"

"Oh, we never take no stock in anything that Dom threatens or promises to do. He never made good yet."

"But this time he has! He has murdered his brother!"

"I don't believe it!" asserted the landlord. "Of course it looked like he got him. But Dom Treadwell has never done anything he set out to do. He might have done it accidental; but trying to do it on purpose—that settles it for Dom. Just naturally can't get through with anything he undertakes."

At that moment old Dornty Treadwell came running back up the street. By his speed, and the vigor with which

he was bawling out his brother, it was plain that murder had not been committed.

"It's just as I said it was," declared the landlord. "I know old Dom so well that I wasn't even worried about the thing. If he had aimed the gun t'other way, not intending to hurt Dornty, both the charges would probably have boomeranged around some way and blowed the top of his brother's head off. But as it was— Well, you let me tell you—"

But Hiram had recovered some of his composure, and remembered that he was a special deputy sheriff assigned to the Sunhaze tragedy. He hurried off the porch and intercepted Dornty Treadwell.

"What kind of complaint do you make against that man?" demanded Mr. Look, pointing up to Colonel Dominicus, who was leaning out of the window, still clutching his gun.

"Murder, assassination, highway robbery—anything that will hang him higher'n Haman was hung!" shrieked the brother.

"Are you hurt anywhere?"

"What the blastnation you got to do with it, anyway?" inquired old Dornty, examining Hiram from plug hat downward.

"I am special county deputy, assigned by the sheriff to this case," stated Hiram, with dignity. "Is this letter in your brother's handwriting?"

"It is. I've seen it, on enough promissory notes and deeds giving away my property," stated Dornty, with venom.

"Then you needn't worry about the law getting him," said Hiram. He looked up at Colonel Treadwell. "He wrote to the high sheriff, threatening this thing. Hi, you, up there! You are under arrest for attempt at murder!"

"Very well," agreed the old man in the window. "I'm glad of it. I'll be right down."

The old men on the settees seemed to be taking the affair with much stolidity. They had stopped whittling, but not a man had left his place.

"He ought to be lynched right here and now!" raged the brother. "I've torn the only pair of pants I've got 'most off'n me on that wagon seat; and that tunk on the head, when I fell backward, made me so dizzy they had to stop my horse and heifer for me."

However, when Colonel Treadwell appeared in the doorway of the brick block, no citizen offered to molest him. Sunhaze seemed to be perfectly satisfied to allow the Treadwell brothers to settle their own differences.

The colonel was tall and gaunt, and his frayed coat fitted him with eelskin closeness. He lifted his fuzzy plug hat when he approached Hiram Look.

"I am glad to surrender to one whom I note is a gentleman," he declared, with a meaning glance at Hiram's stovepipe headgear.

The old showman courteously lifted his own hat before receiving the gun.

"Now why don't ye hug and kiss each other?" stormed old Dornty. "Nice officer of the law you be, bowing and scraping and sallylaving to a man that has tried to murder me! I'll report ye to them in high places!"

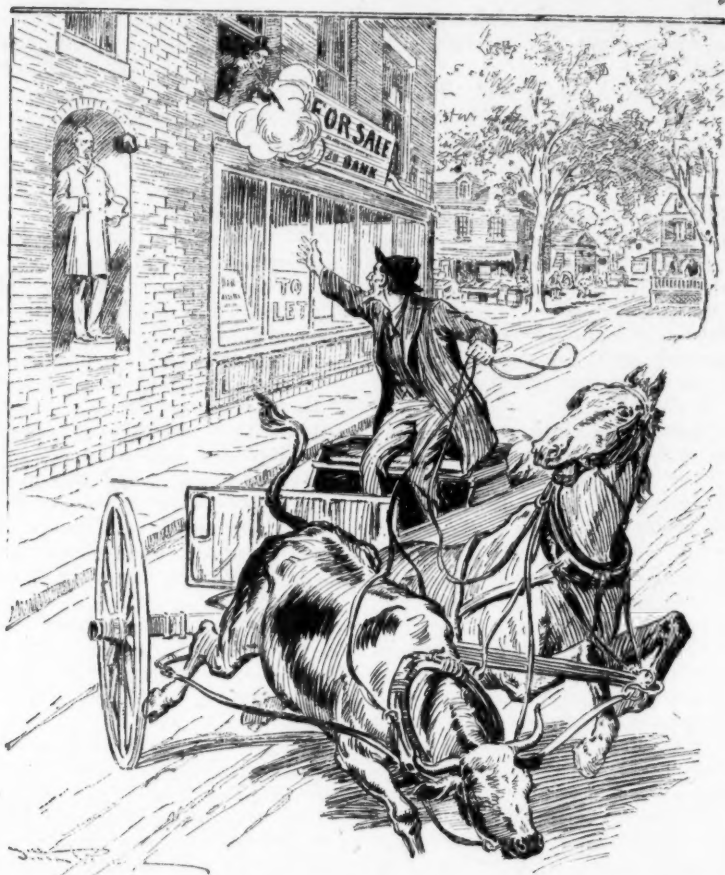
"You show more respect, or I'll run you in, too!" threatened Mr. Look. "Come to think of it, I'll do it anyway."

"You can't arrest me! I haven't done anything. I'm the one that has been put upon."

"I apologize for my brother's rudeness to a gentleman," said Colonel Treadwell, bowing low, with plug hat in hand. "He has always been a great trial to me."

"I'd like to see anybody arrest me!" blustered old Dornty.

"Then put on your specs and take a sharp look, so as not to miss anything," advised Officer Look. "You fired rocks, and started the whole disturbance. You



One of the dusty windows of the block was thrown up with a bang, and the double of the statue, plug hat on head, aimed a gun at his brother and discharged both barrels.

let a horse and heifer go galloping through the streets, endangering citizens. Now you are bringing disrespect on the law by standing there and barking at an officer." He laid clutch about the old man's arm. "You are arrested. You are now seeing just what you wanted to see."

The prisoner promptly swung his free hand and dealt Mr. Look a mighty buffet on the side of his head. The tall

hat was knocked off by the shock. Then the assailant began to kick the officer violently on the shins.

"Where in the blazes is your calaboose?" demanded Hiram, addressing the citizens in general, struggling to master the aged belligerent.

"This being a calm and peaceful town, we don't have any," stated the landlord from the side lines.

"I humbly offer a room in Treadwell

Block," said the colonel. "It will serve as place of detention until you can do better."

"Our bank owns that block," protested the landlord. "We ain't going to turn it into a jail."

"I forgot," explained the colonel blandly. "It is true—the bank has owned it for some years. Pardon my momentary lapse of memory, Mr. Officer. But I built the block, and it is hard for me to remember that I don't own it."

"Thank you for your kindness, just the same," said Hiram, holding himself aloof from the brother's threshing feet as best he could. "You're the only gent in this town, so far as I can see. I'll take this critter to my room in the hotel."

"You can't turn my tavern into a jail, either. If you had confided your business to me at the start off, I might have been helpful; but I have been pushed to one side, and now I'll stay pushed."

Old Dornty suddenly became quiet. He fixed Hiram with flaming gaze.

"Before going farther, I want to warn ye that I'm a spry and desperate man when I'm started." He bared his teeth. "Look at 'em! Double teeth all the way around my mouth. If I ever set 'em into you, you're a goner!"

"You bite me, and you'll find me the heartiest meal you ever tackled!" warned Mr. Look.

"Once a ladder broke under me when I was carrying a bunch of shingles under each arm, and I gripped the eaves with them teeth, and held on till they put up another ladder—and never dropped the shingles. Better leave me go!"

"I've owned six lions in my lifetime, and never got bit," said the old showman. "They knew better. That's a tip to you."

"I have lugged a saw log so heavy that my feet sunk into the solid ground

five inches every step I made. If I let myself loose now, it will go hard with ye."

Hiram merely tightened his clutch.

"And my brother has cheated me out of every cent of my property, and has used it all for himself. I'm being abused, and I warn ye to take your hands off'm me."

"If your story about being cheated is as straight as the rest of that stuff you've been telling, I reckon I can see which side of the family needs the most sympathy," declared Hiram.

"Thank you, sir," volunteered Colonel Treadwell, with another bow.

"What had I better do with this brother of yours?" asked the special officer detailed to the Sunhaze tragedy. The colonel's polite deference had so completely won Mr. Look that he had lost all perspective; he was making the gunman his ally, while the victim had been converted into the malefactor.

Colonel Treadwell had picked up Hiram's hat, and now he finished slicking its nap with his handkerchief and placed the tile carefully on the owner's head, Mr. Look's hands being engaged in restraining the prisoner.

"With all due humility, I suggest that you release him for the time being—sort of—er—on his own recognizance. He can be found again when he is wanted. Furthermore, I would like to have a little private conversation with you. We will step up to my house, if you will allow a prisoner to be so bold as to make the request."

Hiram took his hands off the other prisoner and stepped back and scuffed his palms with the air of a man who had released an unpleasant proposition.

"Stand ready to obey any summons from the court; and, in the meantime, mind your eye about how you throw rocks and race your hitch through the streets here."

"You hout me in public, and man-handle me around, and then go hobnob-

bing with a murderer, do ye? I ask ye what ye're going to do with him?"

"That's my business," declared Hiram stiffly. "You'd better not waste any worry on his case—you need it for your own."

"Thank you," said Colonel Treadwell. "This is the way to my house—not forgetting for a moment that I'm your prisoner, and glad that I am."

It was a weather-beaten and shaky old house, with roof that was hogged and sills that sagged. Bushes encumbered the yard and encroached on the sunken walk that led to the front door.

"No woman's hand to make it home," said Colonel Treadwell sadly. "I have never married. I can no longer afford to have servants. I apologize for appearances. Once it was different. I have tried and I have failed in all things in this life."

He opened the wreck of a gate and bowed Hiram into the yard. The old showman had much sentiment under his hard exterior. This pitiful house, which had once been a mansion, as the vestiges of its ornaments showed; this courtly old man in the threadbare garb of gentility, harassed by his troubles, and provoked to a desperate deed by circumstances that Mr. Look did not thoroughly understand—the whole situation touched him as something extremely pathetic. But most of all was he won by the unfailing deference shown. It was like a caress; it was gratifying and soothing. On that side of his nature, Hiram Look was extremely susceptible.

He walked ahead of his bowing host into a bare hallway. It was big and echoing, and there was not a stick of furniture in it. Spacious parlors opened on each side. They were without furnishings of any sort; there were no carpets, no curtains.

"What will you have me do with this gun?" asked Hiram, trying to hide his embarrassment, fumbling the lethal

weapon, which he had carried since it had been surrendered.

"I suppose you will need it in court as a part of the evidence. You can stand it in the corner, and take it away when you go."

Then the colonel snapped out an ejaculation and grabbed something from a shelf in the hall.

"My, my!" he said irritably. "Here are the loaded shells, just where I laid them out so carefully. In my foolish absent-mindedness, I must have left in the blanks!"

"It doesn't strike me as so very foolish," averred Hiram. "It saved you from killing your brother."

"But it's annoying, sir, very annoying! I never seem to be able to perform anything I start out to do. I had pondered a long time on this matter. I had fully and calmly made up my mind. And here are these loaded shells! I have made a silly mess of it! I only started a runaway! Now all the town will laugh, and say that Dominicus Treadwell had his usual luck. I wanted to show them, by one last act, that I could do one thing I planned to do."

"Killing off a brother ain't anything to hooray over as a sample of what you can do when you try. Look here, Colonel Treadwell, what's the matter with you, anyway? What made you write this letter to the high sheriff? After seeing and hearing and feeling your brother, I can understand a little of your sentiments in regard to him; but why do you want to go to work and get yourself in bad?"

"I will tell you exactly why I tried to kill my brother," replied the colonel mildly, "but first I must extend to you my hospitality, after the manner of gentlemen—craving your pardon because I must make such poor shifts."

He led the way into the dining room. Except for an unpainted table and two chairs, this apartment was as empty as the others.

"I will explain, as one gentleman to another—Mr.—er—"

"Hiram Look."

"I will confess, Colonel Look"—the title fell so gracefully from the host's lips that Hiram did not offer correction—"that except that furniture you see here, and my pallet in an upper room, I have nothing left of all the fine things I used to have. Part of the old furniture I sold, piece by piece, to buy food, and part I chopped up and burned to

keep me from freezing. I have had much trouble and many disappointments."

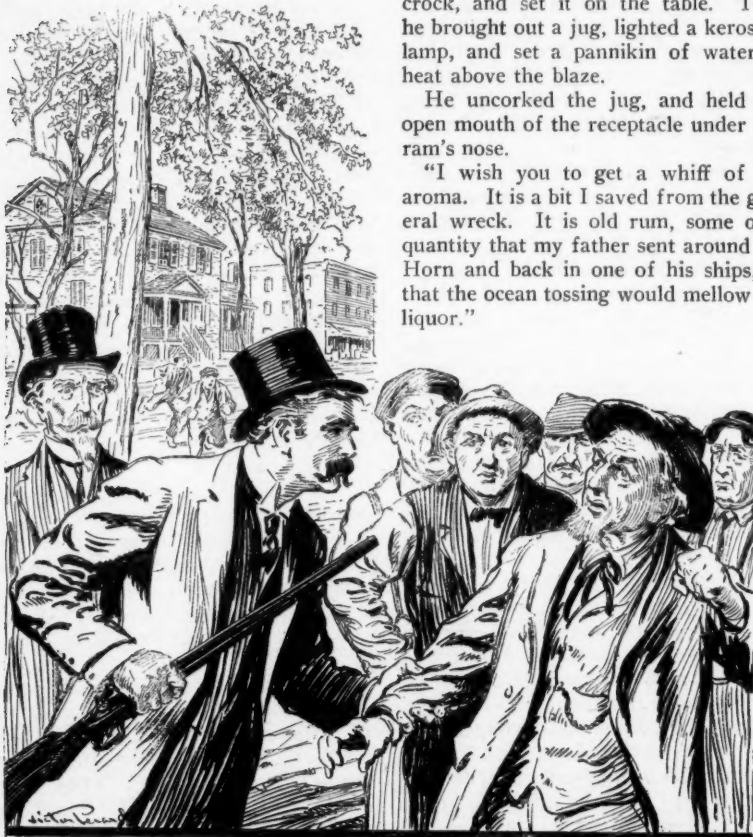
"I want to stand here and say that I'm almighty sorry for you, Colonel Treadwell. I wish there was something I could do for you."

"If you do what the law orders you to do in my case, that's all I ask," returned the colonel. "I planned what I attempted to-day so that the law would be compelled to act."

From a closet he produced a stone crock, and set it on the table. Then he brought out a jug, lighted a kerosene lamp, and set a pannikin of water to heat above the blaze.

He uncorked the jug, and held the open mouth of the receptacle under Hiram's nose.

"I wish you to get a whiff of the aroma. It is a bit I saved from the general wreck. It is old rum, some of a quantity that my father sent around the Horn and back in one of his ships, so that the ocean tossing would mellow the liquor."



He laid clutch about the old man's arm: "You are arrested. You are now seeing just what you wanted to see."

"It certainly smells like Araby the blest," vouchsafed Hiram gratefully.

"I trust you will partake."

"If I turned down a snifter of that goods, I'd never again deserve to be asked if I had a mouth; and hot rum is my long suit. Colonel Treadwell, you're making a hit with me, all right. I need that drink. My nerves have been rattled lately."

"I do not approve intoxicants, *per se*, but I have always found that gentlemen can go more surely and satisfactorily to the heart of matters between themselves after having clinked glasses and sipped a soothing brew."

While the brew was preparing, the colonel uncovered the crock and lifted out something that dangled at the end of a cord.

"It is a bit of rare old Stilton cheese," he explained. "Also a remnant from the wreck of my fortunes. I have kept it in brandy for many years. I will be pleased if you like its flavor."

"I've never been much of a hand for these high-gear'd cheeses," confessed Mr. Look. "A little plain dairy or domestic sage is about as strong as I ever go. However, seeing that it's a gent like you, bring on your double-barreled stuff."

The host poured the brew, and nicked off some cheese with a rusty knife.

"Here's my toast," declared Hiram, with hearty fervor, lifting his steaming glass. "Better luck!"

"I have no more hopes, I fear," said Colonel Treadwell. "I'll own up that lately, in running over my experiences and beholding my mistakes, I have felt that, with another chance, and warned by my past mistakes, I might— But no matter! I am not forgetting that I am your prisoner. What I have done I did with full intent and purpose. I have reached the end of all my resources. I am starving. Suicide? I am not that kind of a coward. Poor farm? I still have New England fam-

ily pride, and I prefer hell, with all its torments, to heaven with the everlasting remembrance that I died 'on the town.' So I determined on fratricide. My brother is old enough to die, anyway, and he has no family, kith, or kin, except myself. I would be keeping the whole affair in the family."

"There's a lot of good sense in what you say," admitted Mr. Look, fingering his nose and surveying the colonel with rising admiration. "With all due respect to you, that brother of yours ain't any ornament to the town, and I don't believe he's any special satisfaction to himself. Have a cigar?"

"I don't mind. I'm sorry I cannot offer you one from my own stock."

He accepted a light from the old showman's match, and puffed with great relish for a few moments.

"So I determined to do something that would enable me to spend my last days in State prison. There's more respect attached to a murderer who kills, man style, in the open, than to a sneaking pauper eating town's bread. I'm sorry I have made such a complete fizzle of the thing; but I suppose that, with proper management, this affair can be made to appear as a desperate attempt at murder."

"I suppose so."

"I am near seventy years of age. Probably ten years will cover my span of life. If I am sentenced for ten years, I'll be relieved of all further worry about my affairs. If you can use your influence with the court, and get a longer sentence for me, I'll be grateful."

"Under the circumstances, and knowing how you feel about it, I'll see what can be done," promised his new ally.

"I'd like to have the matter expedited all that's possible. They have foreclosed on my house, and it will be taken away from me now almost any day. I am of a somewhat hopeful nature, in spite of all that has passed, and

I have waited until the last moment before trying to kill my brother. I hoped that something would turn up. My wits have been sharpened by what I have been through. I have just figured out new plans and projects; but I have no capital. It's all useless. I have come to the end of my rope."

He drank the last of the brew and stood up and tossed his arms above his head.

"Now for the cell—the narrow cell! Good night, my soul, good night!" he shouted, with dramatic intensity.

All the showman nature of Hiram Look was stirred by that spectacle and by that theatric speech. His eyes grew misty, and he could not command his voice.

"Now, at last, when I have pushed through all the brambles of my errors, and have emerged on the broad plain, where I can view the possibilities, all fails me," mourned Colonel Treadwell. "Just when a man has been thoroughly instructed by his mistakes, that's the time when friends fail him and his capital and credit are gone."

"I've known a lot of cases of just that kind," said Hiram, "and I have known some men to make good after everybody thought they were everlastingly done for. I'll be darned if I don't admire a good sport—and I've seen a lot of 'em in my time. The man who stands up to the board and bangs down his last kopeck, and waits till the last card is turned—that's the kind I admire."

He drained his glass, and the colonel started water for a second brew.

"There's not much left in the old jug," he said. "I am at the end of all. We may as well finish the rare old Stilton and the good old rum. I never dared to hope that I would have the solacing companionship of such a true gentleman in finishing these remnants of my fortune. Pardon my presuming to push myself up on a plane of friend-

ship with you. I must remember that I'm a prisoner. Just now, in my house, allow me to presume, and be a host. As soon as I depart from these portals, I will not forget that I am your prisoner."

"Prisoner be condemned! It ain't right, just, or anything else that's sensible. I'm going to get you out of this. I'll go onto the stand as a witness. I'll lie like a gent, if it comes to that. I'll say your brother was firing rocks at you, instead of the statue, and that you acted in self-defense. You shan't go to State prison!"

"But there is the haven I seek!" protested the colonel. "Where else can I go, and preserve my self-respect? I have explained to you. The State provides for criminals. I prefer to be a criminal, and make it straight and regular business between myself and the State." He spread out his palms and smiled wistfully.

The whole situation was affecting Hiram Look tremendously. This all seemed like some romantic drama in which he was playing a part. The big old house, in which their voices echoed through the empty rooms; the gaunt old man, buttoned into his threadbare frock coat, pathetic lord of this pitiful mansion; the crumbs of the last of the treasured cheese; the mellow rum that was spending its final breath of sweet aroma upon the air—the staging of this show made him blink his eyes and wonder whether he was in the realm of reality.

"Prison will be my refuge instead of my punishment," insisted Colonel Treadwell. "And where else can I go? Surely not to the poor farm!"

"That's right," admitted Mr. Look, fingering his nose again and narrowing his eyes in puzzled pondering. "In order to keep a gent's real self-respect, you seem to be naturally elected to State prison."

In the mood in which he found himself at the moment, Hiram would have

pulled his wallet and offered to provide for this old Spartan during the rest of his life. But he frankly owned to himself that he did not dare to insult Colonel Treadwell by such an offer. He reflected that a man who would kill his own brother rather than go to a poor farm would not be likely to accept straight charity from a stranger. However, he resolved to have a go at the thing in indirect fashion.

"Hasn't it occurred to you that you're a little overwrought in this whole thing, colonel? Looking in at State prison from the outside ain't like looking out from the inside. After your present fever calms down, you may be cussed sorry, and want to get out—and it ain't very easy to get out."

"I am quite calm about the matter. My mind is made up. Of course, I'm sorry that I cannot undertake the big propositions I have evolved. My mind has been very active lately. Hunger sharpens the wits and sends the big ideas scurrying about in one's mind. But my own means are exhausted, and I cannot accept aid from strangers; it would be like accepting charity."

He tipped the jug over one of the glasses and drained out the last drops of the rum. He patted the side of the jug and set it away in the closet.

"Farewell," he said. "There is no good cheer in State prison. And now, Colonel Look, sir, if you please, we will drink to the end of the Treadwell fortunes like gentlemen, and then I will bow to you as your prisoner."

"But let's not rush this thing through too sudden," pleaded Hiram. "You don't want to get the stigma of State prison onto you if there's any other way out. Let's get the local justice to arraign you on simple assault, or something, and then you give bail, and stay here in the old house till we can plan something."

"I don't have the least idea what we could plan," sighed the colonel. "But

I am willing to receive suggestions from a gentleman like yourself. You will find me very docile. What suggestion would you like to make?"

"I haven't had time to think," confessed Mr. Look. "This ain't any ordinary case. If it was an ordinary case, I'd say to you"—he gulped and went on—"I'd say, 'Let me pay your board in some nice place, with my compliments, till you get onto your feet once more.'"

"But you wouldn't hurt me by suggesting that," chided the colonel.

"Of course not. I was just supposing a case. I was showing you that your case is different. I was showing you——" He began to flounder, abashed by the old man's steady gaze. A timely interruption saved him from further embarrassment. Somebody pounded on the front door, starting the echoes all through the house.

Colonel Treadwell went with dignity and threw open the door, and a considerable delegation of citizens filed in. The landlord of the tavern led, and old Dornity Treadwell served as rear guard.

"As trustee of the Sunhaze Savings Bank, and representing the board, most of 'em being here, I order you out of this house, Colonel Treadwell. We have foreclosed on our mortgage, and now have the papers of the court."

"Good reddance to bad rubbage," squealed old Dornity from the rear. "Citizens can now move around about their business without being shot at, and the henroosts of this town will be safer."

"Look here, you land pirates!" blazed Hiram, angered by this invasion. "Don't all jump on a man when he's down!"

"And what have you done to him, yourself?" demanded the landlord. "Do you call arresting him and starting him off for jail a special kindness?"



"There's going to be some scandal when this thing gets noised abroad." They displayed determined faces.

Special Officer Look felt confusion, and showed it.

"When a man will try to kill his own brother, there ain't any telling how soon he will set fire to this house, so as to carry out his general grudge!" shouted Dornty Treadwell.

"So you're the critter that's been putting fleas in their ears, hey?" demanded Hiram. "Persecuting your own brother! You ought to be ashamed of yourself!"

"And I'll put fleas in other ears! You're a nice kind of officer! You're a credit to the high sheriff! You didn't

arrest the criminal that tried to shoot me! You arrested me! And here you are, drinking and carousing with him—and getting ready to set the house on fire!"

"I know persecution when I see it," protested Hiram, "just the same as I know a real gent when I see one. Colonel Treadwell ain't ever had a show in this town. He hasn't been appreciated. You sat there on your own tavern porch and houted him," he declared, wagging finger under the landlord's nose.

"I'm a constable in this town, with full power to arrest," stated that of-



Hiram grabbed the loaded shells from the shelf, broke down the gun, and loaded it.

fended gentleman, backing away from Hiram's finger. "You ain't arresting. You ain't doing anything but hobnobbing and condoning."

"And carousing!" cried old Dornity. "This whole room is all stunk up with rum!"

"Seeing that you ain't inclined to do your duty, I'll do it! I'll arrest this criminal!"

"I'd like to see you do it!" boomed Mr. Look, throwing back the lapel of his coat to show his special deputy's badge.

"And then I'll arrest you, too, for aid-

ing, abetting—and for interfering with an officer!"

"You will, will you?" There was challenge in Mr. Look's sneer.

"I summon this body of citizens as a posse. Guard the door, boys!"

There was no longer any glamour of romance on the situation in the old house. This was rural practicality with a vengeance, so Hiram Look perceived. To be sent as special deputy by the high sheriff, and then be arrested by a country constable, as party to the crime that had been contemplated, would make a combination of circum-

stances which would give to a certain gentleman named Look a notoriety that would overshadow anything then current in the county of Cuxabexis. It was proposition preposterous; it was peril not to be undergone.

"Don't you recognize the authority of this badge?" inquired Hiram, tapping the insignia. "I'm straight from the sheriff's office."

"You might have been straight when you started," taunted old Dornty, "but you have grown almighty crooked since then—consorting and carousing with a bloodstained murderer! It ain't his fault he didn't kill me. I call on the constable and the posse!"

"The prisoner has already been arrested," declared the special deputy.

His voice quavered a bit. The men who flanked him, and who guarded the door, evidently felt the courage that arises from numbers.

The landlord picked up the empty glasses and sniffed at first one and then the other. Then he passed the damning evidence to another of the group.

"It will make quite a story to tell in court, fellow citizens," he suggested. "Officer and prisoner going off on a toot together. There are a good many new-fangled ways of doing old things in these days, but I don't believe any judge will stand up and give three cheers when he hears of this performance."

"Do you mean to tell me—do you dare to stand there, you mess of hicks, and threaten to arrest me?" demanded the furious old showman, beating his breast. "I'll give you the 'Hey Rube' holler in about two seconds unless you call this off!"

They displayed determined faces.

"We're taking our orders from our regular constable, who is strickly on his job, and ain't allowing himself to be hornswoiggled by a prisoner," stated one of the men at the door. "There's going to be some scandal when this thing gets noised abroad."

"Then we may as well make that scanda' a good and godiferous one!" bawled Hiram.

He leaped to the corner and secured the double-barreled gun. The men in the doorway scattered out of his path when he rushed at them. They did not know that the gun was empty. The big man with the sweeping mustache was a savage-looking antagonist. In the hall, Hiram grabbed the loaded shells from the shelf, broke down the gun, and loaded it.

"Mark well that I'm an officer claiming a prisoner, and a mob is threatening to take that prisoner away! I've got the law behind me, and I'll blow that whole roomful of you into cat meat if you so much as raise a hand, any of ye! Prisoner, come out here!"

Colonel Treadwell bowed courteously and put on his plug hat and obeyed. The posse did not attack. They had seen that gun loaded, and the menacing face of Hiram Look indicated that he meant business.

"You're going with me, and going now!" Hiram advised the colonel.

"I'm glad of it. I have no other place to go," said the prisoner, with serenity. "They have just taken my roof from over my head."

"Get your belongings!"

"I think I have everything on my back and on my head, sir. Pardon my preceding you through the front door, but I believe the prisoner should go ahead."

Thus did Colonel Dominicus Treadwell step forth from the home of his fathers, closing the chapter of the misfortunes that had beset his life in Sunhaze.

His statue in the niche in the façade of Treadwell Block seemed to leer at him as he stalked along beside Hiram Look on their way to the stable where the hired team had been lodged. The old men who were whittling in front of

the stores glanced up at him without displaying any special interest in his affairs.

"Anybody around here you want to say a special good-by to?" asked his custodian.

"No, sir. So far as this town is concerned, I believe I will consider it a closed incident in my life."

"Judging from what little I have seen of the town, and from what I know of the folks in it, I want to approve of your good judgment."

Ten minutes later, Hiram Look and his prisoner drove out of the village, and nobody put up hand to stop them.

"And there's the everlasting end of old Dom Treadwell—whittled out to a sharp point and then the point knocked off," was the valedictory pronounced by one of the aged whittlers when the carriage dropped out of sight over the rim of a hill. "He's going to be put

into jail for the rest of his life. It's the best place for him."

At that same moment the identical sentiment was expressed by the prisoner himself.

"I'm glad you're going to put me in jail, Colonel Look. It's the best place for me."

"Don't you roll onto your back and stick your paws in the air just yet," advised Hiram.

"I think my little story has reached its end, sir."

"You just lap your thumb and turn to the next page."

"But a man who has been put into prison——"

"You ain't going to be put into prison—not so long as I'm on my job."

"But where am I to be put?" inquired the colonel apprehensively.

"You're going to be put in right," asserted his new friend.

TO THE READER: *Almost any man other than Hiram Look would have allowed Colonel Treadwell's life story to wind up at the prison gate. But Hiram Look is too much of a human pulmotor to allow a story to die in that fashion. How he undertook to put the colonel "in right" will be related in the next number of SMITH'S.*

MOTHER LOVE

I DO not know how rolls the world—

I only see his dimpled feet,
His tiny fingers warmly curled
Around my own; and it is meet
That my life's sun rise in his eyes
And set, and make my life complete.

God's heaven may be a perfect thing—
How white his little limbs and fair!
It may be truth that angels sing
God's praise unweariedly there—
His baby laugh, his hands that cling,
And fasten, clinging, in my hair!

Beyond his smile there may be space,
The spheres their little course may run,
There may be light beyond his face,
And past his eyes there may be sun.
I only know were his head low,
The race of all the world were done.

MARY CAROLYN DAVIES.

ON WATROUS RANCH

BY
VIRGINIA MIDDLETON



Author of "Making Over Mark," "Lucre and the Lady," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY ROBERT A. GRAEF

'DEED, Albert, I don't think you do right by Bobby to leave her runnin' wild like this."

Despite her words of complaint, Miss Marianna Purdy's voice was listless. She had the nagger's habit and vocabulary, but not the nagger's manner. Her thin, nervous, worried face did not grow noticeably more worried as she spoke of the derelictions of her half brother, Albert Watrous, in regard to Bobby. Indeed, Miss Purdy's features and accustomed air were such that it was difficult for her to express any accentuation of the gloomier emotions.

"Oh, Bobby'll take care of herself, all right," returned Albert Watrous, as hearty and jovial as his relative was languid and melancholic. "Sit down there, Mr. Magee, an' pitch in. Reckon you're hungry, after your drive. Some pitcher an' tosser, Jed Rumford's coach!"

Mr. Clarence Magee, newcomer upon the Watrous ranch, and still a little dazed by the fashion in which he had made the final stage of his approach to it—a series of miraculous escapes up and down mountainsides, it had seemed to him, in a coach drawn, pulled, jerked, hurled, by four horses under the direction of a maniac—dropped into the chair indicated for his use at the table.

The light from an unshaded kerosene lamp shone full into his eyes; the chimney, he noted, was as clean and polished as crystal, but the glare was undoubtedly trying to an optic taste that had recently been accustoming itself to the delicate shades upon the restaurant candles in "the largest, best, and most recherché hotel between New York and Chicago." He also found the red, square-patterned tablecloth rather lacking in charm.

"Plain folks you'll find us, Mr. Magee," declared Mr. Watrous energetically, as he made an incision into a deep-dish meat pie.

"Oh, I'm plain folks myself, Mr. Watrous," Mr. Magee assured his host, with the kindly intention of putting him at his ease. Yet Mr. Magee knew, in the depths of a recollection which he seldom called into exercise in these later days, that he spoke but the simple truth. But it had been a long time, now, since he had taken time to recall his earlier development—the days when the unshaded kerosene lamp of his intimate acquaintance might not have been so flecklessly bright as the one now confronting him, or the red-barred tablecloth so guiltless of spot or stain as this one whereon his ample meal was spread.

"Well," replied Mr. Watrous geni-

ally, introducing a blade of gravy from the meat pie into his mouth, "city folks ain't never quite as plain as country folks. Howsomever, we aim to make you comfortable while you're with us, an' we guarantee to set you up. You'll go back feelin' like a fightin' cock—we're just naturally bound to cure all them lesions Phil Stebbins wrote about."

"I am sure the wonderful atmosphere—" began Mr. Magee politely.

But his tribute to the Colorado air was destined to remain unspoken, for Bobby Watrous entered the room—about as decorously as a gamesome young calf or a stray section of a tornado might have entered it.

"Hello, people!" she called, as a door slammed noisily behind her. "Begun without me! Of all the little piggies! No, Aunt Marianna—"

"Roberta, don't you see there's a gentleman—a—a—stranger present?" demanded Aunt Marianna, as the girl swung toward the table, the spurs on her high-heeled riding boots clacking as she came.

"Oh, excuse me!"

Roberta was suddenly stiff and shy. Clarence Magee arose to pull back the one vacant chair at the table in his best manner, and to be presented to the young hoyden.

"This is my girl, Bobby," announced Mr. Watrous placidly. He poured the contents of his teacup comfortably into his capacious saucer, blew lightly upon it, and drank with deep enjoyment. Evidently, he was conscious of no lack in the ceremony he had just performed.

"Charmed, I'm sure," murmured Clarence, with the bow he had learned last winter at the dancing class upon which Mame Green had persuaded him his social future depended.

"How d'ye do?" murmured Bobby briefly, sidling by him and slinking into her chair, her eyes discreetly upon the table.

Conversation proceeded awkwardly. Miss Purdy confined her observations to questions dolefully put as to each person's appetite for jam, biscuits, or cake; Bobby said nothing; Mr. Watrous asked a number of things concerning city life in that section of the East from which Mr. Magee hailed, and about his old friend, Philip Stebbins, which Mr. Magee answered as volubly as he could.

By and by, he caught Bobby's brown eyes fixed upon him. He was sure that there was uncharitable mirth in them. They were very attractive eyes, except for the mischievous devil that seemed to hide in the corners and to declare a readiness to spring out at a moment's notice. What the dickens did the girl find funny in his appearance? His outfit was exactly what a Western sporting outfit should be; he had called upon the head of the suits' department of Douglas & Finch, the camp outfitters, and had taken his expert and friendly advice before making a purchase. No little sunburned baggage with a tip-tilted nose could put him out of conceit with those immaculate corduroys, those rolling-collared silk shirts, those extremely slouched hats. And as for looking at him like that—with a covert jeer on her pert face—good heavens! If the girl only knew what an appearance *she* made!

She was not correct in the smallest particular. She wore a stiff collar on her flannel blouse, regardless—or ignorant—of the sartorial edict that there should not be a high-collared female neck, of any age, in the whole instructed world. Her flannel blouse was faded to a dingy blue; it might once have been of very good color, but that day was certainly past. As for pinning on a red, ready-made bow with an amethyst bar pin—oh, really, come now—it was too bad! It really was! It was inexcusable! Even in the mountainous wilds of Colorado, the fashion papers must penetrate. It was unforgivable!

Mame Green would be reassured could she but see his vis-à-vis. Mame had protested herself jealous when he left—jealous of a tribe of unknown, breezy, Western charmers. Gee! Clarence relapsed into the exclamatory style of his earlier days. Gee! Mame's mind would certainly be set at ease could she but see—this! Not that the child wasn't pretty, though. Hang it! What was she grinning at?

Mr. Magee was not privileged to discover the cause of Bobby Watrous' unconcealed mirth that evening. When supper was over, she retired, with her lugubrious Aunt Marianna, to the kitchen, and wiped the dishes which that lady washed with sad efficiency. The girl chattered the while with a volubility amazing when one considered the scantiness of the response it evoked; but Clarence, securely under his host's thumb, could not overhear about what she chattered.

"Yes," rumbled Mr. Watrous, "me an' Phil Stebbins was boys together, back in Vermont. His folks had the next farm to my folks—it makes me laugh to think of callin' them stony, run-down acres farms! Howsomever, folks managed to raise right smart-sized families on them. As soon as we was big enough to know our own minds, Phil an' me both vamoosed. He didn't go very far—got off at Utica, an' got a job in a store there. Well, he tells me that the store he's built up in your city is a crackajack. Real proud of that store, Phil seems."

"It's the largest and most completely equipped department store between New York and Chicago," recited Clarence glibly; "a direct importer from many European countries; second to no establishment in the United States in many departments."

"Yes. Just so. So Phil gimme to understand when he was out here last, a matter of two years ago. Phil's get-

tin' stout an' logy. Ought to grip his knees against a horse's flanks oftener than what he does, so I told him."

"The old man doesn't take enough exercise," agreed Mr. Magee languidly. "He's a motor-car athlete."

Clarence reflected upon his own wisdom and virtue in keeping up his membership in the gymnasium of the local Y. M. C. A., despite the competing charms of the dancing class and the hotel suppers. But then, of course, his employer had never been a—er—well, a handsome man. It must be rather a bore to strive to preserve a figure that wasn't worth preserving, at best. He threw out his chest a little and fingered the tie—one of six from the swellest haberdashery in town—that Mame Green had presented him as a farewell gift.

"Just what is your job with Phil?" demanded Mr. Watrous suddenly.

Clarence, who was feeling for his cigarette case, reddened slightly in the darkness of the piazza, conscious of a listening lull in the kitchen.

"I'm—er—assistant manager of—er—the lingerie and neckwear department."

Hitherto, Clarence had uttered these words, when opportunity offered, with considerable pride; to-night, for some unknown reason, he uttered them as if he were confessing to a crime. But low as he muttered them, he was sure his admission had been overheard; he was sure he caught a sniff—a snort—of unseemly laughter from the kitchen window; and he was quite sure that Mr. Watrous was staring at him disapprovingly through the deep, mountain-shadowed darkness. Confound the people! What was there ridiculous in a large mercantile position? Would they think it funny when he became the Stebbins—the A. T. Stewart—of his day? Nevertheless, he squirmed.

"That's underclothes, ain't it—women's underclothes?" demanded Wa-



"Well, what do you think of him, then?" Bobby flashed back, her voice high.
 "He—he sells women's underclothes!"

trous, in tones freighted rather with reproof than contempt.

"Oh, and blouses and linen gowns, and all that sort of thing," said Mr. Magee swiftly.

"Hum—— Well, of course it takes all sorts of people to make up a world. Phil Stebbins—he always liked store-keepin', an' I suppose, if you're a store-keeper, you have to understand things you sell, whether it's corsets or Colts."

"Colts?" said Clarence dully. There was no horse department in Stebbins' Great Lakes' Greatest Emporium.

"Yes—revolvers, you know. Yes, a storekeeper ain't got no choice but to know everythin' he sells." Mr. Watrous was, all too palpably, trying to extenuate the fact that a young man, six feet one in length, and proportionately broad, should admit that his position in the commercial world depended upon a familiarity with nightgowns and boudoir caps, jabots and lace jackets. "An' Stebbins said, when he wrote an' asked if Marianna could put you up for a month or six weeks, that you was one of his most valued employees an' that

he was under considerable obligation to you?"

The ranchman ended on a rising inflection, but Clarence had his modesties.

"Oh, he exaggerates the little thing I did," he said hastily. "It wasn't anything at all—any one else could have done it just as well as I."

And then he coughed, partly in embarrassment, to be sure; but the sound reminded Mr. Watrous of the real reason for his guest's presence on the ranch.

"It's bedtime for you," he announced, looming large and formidable above Clarence's chair. "Rest an' fresh air was what you needed to set you up, Phil wrote, an' that means bed by eight on a day when you've been druv into Cascade by Jed Rumford! Marianna! Is Mr. Magee's room all ready?"

Miss Purdy morosely admitted that the room was all ready. She came out into the hall, which the two men had entered, and she handed Clarence a little glass lamp by which to light himself to bed. In the background glimmered the slim figure and mocked the provocative face of Miss Roberta Watrous. She uttered no "good night," however.

Reaching his room, beautifully, restfully bare, sweet with the scent of fragrant timbers and of pine boughs standing in a great gray-stone pitcher in one corner, Mr. Magee discontentedly set the lamp upon the bureau. His trunk he had already opened, and its admirable assortment of suits, each upon its hanger, was already disposed of on the hooks beneath the blue denim curtains that formed the only closet. His shirts—all those elegant affairs of silk and fine flannel—his underwear chosen with the most fastidious care as to hue and cut—Clarence could never see his pink silk pajamas without a glow of pleasure—were in neat piles upon the bed, ready for distribution into the bureau drawers.

The trunk top was raised, and in the top tray he saw his other belongings—his brushes, silver-mounted and correct; his leather writing portfolio which the clerks of his department—under the coercive influence of Mame Green, he knew—had presented to him in farewell; his books—three novels by Chambers and one by Marie Corelli; and the silver-mounted photograph of Mame Green.

He lifted Mame's picture out first, and stared at it. It represented a showily good-looking woman in a low-necked gown and a large black velvet hat. The photographer's art, and the shadow of the hat brim, combined to give a delicacy to the features which they lacked in nature and to blur the fact—of which, nevertheless, Mr. Magee was acutely conscious as he looked—that the lady was traveling on toward forty at a rapid rate. Clarence had never thought much about that. Mame was so altogether "swell," and "swellness" had grown to seem to him such a desirable attribute, that he had seldom considered her age.

The thing that put the thought in his mind now was nothing in the smiling pictured face he held in his hand, but the presence before his mind's eye of another face—incontestably young, brown, mocking—the face of Miss Roberta Watrous. He told himself that Mame could give the girl cards and spades, and then beat her to death on looks. Gee! Mame's hair itself was a work of art! Mame's figure was always miraculously what the season's styles demanded. Mame's jewelry was grand—simply grand! Mame's voice and laugh had been cultivated upon indubitably elegant models. Mame was, in short, a queen!

And what had she not done for him, the unformed, the untrained? She had made him! Not industrially, of course—his own energy, shrewdness, and tact had made his career at Stebbins—but

socially, what had she not been? She had introduced him to his first clam cocktail and his first salad fork; she had insisted upon his going to every "high-life" show that visited the city. She had educated him, formed him! He owed everything to her.

He planted her photograph firmly on the bureau, unearthed and donned his bath gown of wine-colored matalesse and his matching bath slippers, lit a monogrammed cigarette, and disposed himself with Robert Chambers in a rocking-chair. Gee, but he would be glad to get back to civilization again! He must hurry and recover from the hang-over cold that had racked his big frame ever since his attack of pneumonia. He must make haste to get well, to get out of these woods and back to real life.

Fortunate for him that that attack of pneumonia had been acquired in Mr. Stebbins' service. He supposed that fact, together with his real ability as an assistant buyer, "cinched" his job for him. Who would have thought it when, fifteen years ago, he, Clarry Magee—freckled, big-knuckled, a fighter from the wharf district, newly arrived at the eminence of "working papers"—had obtained a job in the packing room at Stebbins'? Who could have foreseen the dizzy rise to power and elegance? He had been a "tough nut" in those days, the material—except for a sterling honesty that was in him and for the determination of the hard-driven aunt who had given his orphanhood a home that he should not become a loafer—out of which gangsters are made. And now behold him, a dead ringer for John Drew in the intimate scene of the last play in which John Drew had visited Clarry's home town! The world was certainly a curious place.

Mame Green had been there at Stebbins' when he had first emerged from the packing rooms, under the basement

salesrooms, to the floor, in the capacity of a "cash." Mame had been there then—and at that time she had been distinctly older than Clarry. That was one of the strange things about time—that equalization of all ages. She had been a sales person in the gloves. Now she was a buyer for gloves. It was on a steamer on which they had happened to cross together, six years ago—his first trip abroad as assistant buyer—that Mame had first taken him in hand. He owed her a lot of gratitude.

Outside, he heard a silvery, ringing laugh. Then he heard the boom of an answering bass guffaw. Bobby was in conversation with some of the cowboys, come up from their quarters, which he had passed on his way in to Watrous'. A girl oughtn't to be allowed to run wild like that—

What was that fool hallooing over?

"Pink silk pajamas, Bobby! Honest to goodness, ain't you foolin'?" Apparently Bobby convinced her interlocutor of the truth of her report, for the voice rolled on, struggling through helpless laughter: "Pink silk pajamas! Pin-k—sil-k—"

"Bobby!" objected the dismal voice of Aunt Marianna, audible in the cessation of vulgar guffawing. "I don't think it's nice for a young lady to talk about a man's underclothes!"

"Well, what do you think of him, then?" Bobby flashed back, her voice high. "He—he sells women's underclothes! It's his—job"—Bobby broke off, overcome by a spasm of mirth—"his job," she resumed gaspingly, "to know whether they're wearing their petticoats full or skimpy! Oh, my! And to tell whether tucks or feather stitching is the thing this year! His job!"

"Ssh! There's a light in his room!" warned Aunt Marianna.

And there was a sudden guilty silence out of doors.



She had been for a second afraid to go toward the fallen, motionless quite rationally, and had said, in that ridiculous

II.

"You hadn't ought to have done it, Bobby," old Pete, foreman of the Watrous ranch, reproved the daughter of the family.

"Served him right for pretending," pouted Bobby.

"I guess he wouldn't have no manner

of difficulty in makin' you look a figger of fun if he caught you back there in the East," persisted Pete. "You hadn't no manner of right to mount him on Hellion, you know you hadn't. There's plenty of horses in the corral he could hev rode. He stayed on remarkable, anyhow! An' he's a sick man, an' he's in your paw's house." Thus Pete



figure. But he hadn't even been stunned. He had looked at her party voice of his, "Deuced awkward of me."

summed up the code. "An' your paw ain't goin' to like it none when he comes in from Warsaw an' hears tell of what you've done."

"Who's goin' to tell him?" snapped Bobby. "You can be sure Mr. Magee isn't. He may be a sissy—he *is* a sissy, with his pink night shirts—but he won't squeal. He'd be ashamed."

"I'm layin' off to tell your paw myself, Bobby," stated Pete tranquilly. "Your aunt's been sayin' for two years that you had ought to be sent away to school to learn a few lady tricks, an' I think your paw'll agree when he hears that you mounted a sick young gentleman on Hellion, an' took him out for a ride up the trail to Beaver's Dam.

It's time somebody took you in hand, Bobby. Why, suppose you had killed him!"

Bobby's face, already a trifle pale beneath its brown, grew suddenly paler. Her mutinous eyes were frightened. Pete had voiced the great horror and dread that had surged up in her when first Hellion had begun bucking. She had been occupied, up to that moment, in sneers, none too covert, at the newness of Mr. Magee's riding breeches—London model—and at the ornateness of his crop. But when Hellion, who had gone the first five miles of the trail in so lamblake a manner as to disgust the young lady, who had promised herself a little sport, had suddenly gathered all four of his legs underneath him and had tried his utmost to throw over his head the elegant figure that bestrode him, her heart had stood still with sudden fear. She was positively glad that Clarence had managed to maintain his seat; and she had watched Hellion's next gathering up of legs, next violent plunge forward, with terror. When finally he had managed to unseat his rider, and had galloped off down the trail as swift as a streak of lightning, she had been for a second afraid to go toward the fallen, motionless figure. Suppose—

But what was the use of supposing horrors? He hadn't been even stunned. He had looked at her quite rationally, and had said, in that ridiculous party voice of his, "Deuced awkward of me." Then, to be sure, he had fainted. Oh, well, despite Pete, the damage had not been great. Not a bone was broken. He had been badly bruised, and one hand had been rather painfully compressed, but—she snapped her white teeth together vindictively—he would never again pretend to her about his horsemanship, or speak of the bridle path along the Lake Boulevard at home. And he need never again look at her tousled hair as if he found it funny.

He had better remember that she had seen him look worse than funny.

"You can do as you please about telling dad, Pete," she said loftily. "You know I didn't pin Mr. Magee onto Hellion, or teach Hellion to buck. If he pretended to understand horses, it wasn't my fault. Bah! He never was on a nag, unless it was a Sunday-hired rocking-horse from some livery stable!" she added contemptuously.

She turned on her heel and left Pete. She went into her room, and experimented for half an hour with a new fashion of hairdressing. She also tried the effect of bare throat and shoulders, turning in the top of her flannel blouse as far as was practicable. Finding that the sudden line of demarcation between deep tan and milk-white skin was not beautiful, and that the bones in her throat were rather prominent, she said, somewhat sharply, and quite irrelevantly, "She's forty, if she's a day!" and seemed to take comfort in the saying. Then, as Dirk, one of the boys, rode in with the leather mail bags from Cascade, she ran from her room and intercepted him.

There were three letters for Mr. Magee, one in an unmistakably feminine hand and on superlatively fine paper. Bobby made a face at it. Then she discovered what she was looking for in the mass of papers. It was a book. She kept it in its wrappings until she reached her room again. There she uncovered it, and sat down to absorb its contents—the contents of "The Usages of Polite Society," by Mrs. van Rensselaer Sturtevant.

When she had raced through half of it, and had examined all the pictures, showing tables correctly set for breakfast, luncheon, dinner, or the tea, simple or complex; when she had examined, with mingled awe and amusement, the reproductions of the type of calling cards used by the elect, she hid the book beneath her pillow and went downstairs.

Mr. Magee, his manly beauty slightly impaired by a variegated bruise over one eye and a cut on the chin, sat on the piazza reading his thick, femininely addressed letter. He wore a heliotrope silk shirt, and the socks that showed beneath the edge of his white flannel trousers were also heliotrope. Bobby gave an irrepressible snort. But she recalled, at the moment of its utterance, that her aunt had told her early that morning of a hole in the faded tan stockings that were covering her long, thin, coltish legs. She wished now that she had hearkened to Aunt Marianna with something more than her mere physical ears. She couldn't pass in front of—that tailor's advertisement and expose her slovenliness to him. However much she might despise heliotrope socks, she was aware that they could not stand so low in the scale of self-revelations as did holes in stocking heels.

Clarence rose with his unfailing, ineffable gentility and waited for her to speak to him or to pass on. Bobby sat down in the chair nearest the door, thereby releasing him from his ceremonial position.

"I hope you're feeling better?" she said.

"Oh, yes, thanks," replied Clarry.

He scanned her head a trifle curiously. She had forgotten to take down her hair from the rather modish coiffure with which she had been experimenting. Where had she picked up that style? Ah, he had it—from a snapshot of Mame, bareheaded, in golf clothes, which he had left lying on his table. Mame, to be sure, couldn't play golf, but she liked the effect of golf clothes, and she had accompanied him and some of the golfers from the store to the public links one Sunday. How much better Bobby looked with her hair that way than Mame had looked!

He was a little startled by finding what he had thought. It was disloyal

to Mame—and Mame had simply made him what he was socially. He repeated the words to himself as a religious devotee might repeat the words of a litany.

"I suppose I oughtn't to have let you ride Hellion," muttered Bobby.

Clarence swallowed hard.

"I suppose I ought to have known better than to ride him," he said. "The fault was not yours, Miss Watrous; it was altogether mine. I am—I guess I don't need to tell you so," he added ruefully, "but I'm no horseman. I've only been on horseback about three times in my life—and then the horses were quiet old livery plugs."

"It was my fault," persisted Bobby, though her eyes dwelt upon him more kindly now. "I did it purposely. I don't mean that I wanted him to hurt you," she interrupted herself to say hastily. "But—I—I wanted you to see there was something in the world you couldn't do!"

"There are lots of things," said Clarence.

"You'd been talking so much about one-stepping and golf links and all those things," poor Bobby rambled on, half accusing, half pleading. "I wanted you to see that there was something you couldn't do."

"Well, you showed me, all right," admitted Clarence, making a slight grimace at the recollection of his lesson.

"I tell you what I'll do," Bobby went on contritely. "I'll ride with you every day, and teach you all I know—if—if that would—sort of square things."

How pretty she was when the embarrassed red ran beneath her brown cheeks like that and her big eyes were bright with shame and apology and half a dozen other emotions!

"You bet it will square things!" cried Clarence joyfully. He was rather pleased with the thought of the new accomplishment he would have to display when he went back, in a month, to Steb-



She recalled that her aunt had told her early that morning of a hole in the faded tan stockings that were covering her long, thin, coltish legs.

bins' Great Lakes' Greatest Emporium. "And I'll teach you the new dance steps, if you'd like to learn them."

"I'd love to!" said Bobby, with shining eyes.

The mutual lessons went merrily on for a week. Clarence found that he had so much to do that he could not dress more than twice a day, despite the example of the unflinching heroes of his favorite society dramas. He even went to bed some nights without first don-

ning the wine-colored bath wrap. Meantime, a box arrived from Chicago for Bobby, and she forthwith made her appearance in blouses and skirts of a later vintage than those in which she had been appearing. One night Clarence was astonished—and his suffering eyes were immeasurably relieved—to find that a wire frame, supporting a silvery, grass-cloth shade, had been affixed to the dining-table lamp.

Albert Watrous, just back from Omaha, grumbled, to be sure, that he couldn't see to find his way to his mouth, but that was obviously a peasantry; and Miss Marianna's plaint that the thing would be fly-specked in no time brought forth no other remark from the instigator of the change—Roberta—than the revolutionary statement that there were to be no flies in the house.

"I seen Phil Stebbins in Omaha," announced Albert Watrous to his womenfolk, when, the meal ended, Clarence had ambled down to the men's quarters, and the family was alone. He spoke seriously. "He thinks a heap of this young feller here—an' he's got a right to."

"What was Mr. Stebbins doin' in Omaha?" asked Aunt Marianna, but without active interest; while Roberta cried: "Why does he think so much of him, dad?"

"He's thinkin' of openin' a fresh-provisions department," Mr. Watrous answered Aunt Marianna, "an' he come West to see what sort of dicker he could make with some of the packers."

"But about Mr. Magee, dad?" insisted Bobby.

Her father pinched her ear.

"Don't you let yourself get so all-fired interested in Mr. Magee," he warned her jocosely. "Mr. Magee's bespoke."

Bobby was silent for a second, while Aunt Marianna ventured the declaration that that was no news—a man wouldn't carry a trunkful of pictures of a woman around with him if he wasn't bespoke.

"That's so," agreed Bobby, with great eagerness, "but I want to know what he did, dad, that makes Mr. Stebbins feel so grateful to him."

"Well, it seems that Stebbins has a workroom where a lot of the things he sells are made—shirt waists an' one thing an' another, an' in the early spring, in the busy season, he was workin' the hands overtime gettin' ready for the spring rush—it seems he makes quite a point in his emporium advertisin' about how the truck is made under healthful conditions right there on the premises. An' one evenin' the hands was workin'—mostly girls at the big power machines, you know—an' some fool dropped a lighted match into some waste. Don't ask me why any fool was lightin' a match there, or if any fool was disobeyin' rules an' 'smokin', but anyway there was a fire started up in the ninth-story workrooms, an' the rest of the store closed an' the elevators off duty.

"It seems that this young Magee was there, overseenin' somethin' about shirt waists, an' he turned in an alarm an' he kept order an' he ran an elevator down an' got every blamed girl out before the fire department got around. Kept his head—didn't let 'em have a panic, an' saved fifty or sixty lives. Caught his death of cold doin' it—rainy night, an' he never stopped to get on a hat between loads. You wouldn't expect that sort of thing from a man like him, with nothin' on his mind, as far's any one could see, except changin' his

clothes eight or nine times a day. But Stebbins says he's a good, keen business man, for all his pink pajamas; says he'll get over that period, most likely, in a year or two. Either that, or he'll get completely stuck on himself an' his clothes, an' never go on any further.

"Seems he's makin' good money, an' has no one to support but himself, so he's been goin' in considerable for high rollin'—as high as he can manage in a place that ain't a Paree when it comes to opportunity. Phil said, though, that his behavior at that fire had redeemed him from some of the bad opinion he was beginnin' to form of him. He says he's made up his mind to take all the dress-up, la-de-da business the same as he takes his own boy's green plush hats at college. Magee never went to college, of course—and he's kind of late in reachin' the purple-socks period—but Phil Stebbins says he believes it'll be passin', same as his boy's at Princeton."

Miss Purdy commented, discouragingly, that a person once a fool was likely to remain always a fool. And by and by, Bobby asked, in a remote, carefully indifferent voice, if Mr. Stebbins had said to whom Mr. Magee was engaged.

"Oh, some woman in the store," replied Mr. Watrous, knocking the ashes from his pipe. "Been there for years, Phil says—a buyer or somethin'."

Then he yawned, rose heavily to his feet, and said he felt the need of sleep after his journey. He patted Bobby's head, in passing, and Bobby caught at his big, kind, rough hand, and held it for a second against her cheek. Then she, too, slipped into the house and disappeared into her room. For the first night in a week she did not read the wise words of Mrs. van Renssalaer Sturtevant.

"What's the use?" Bobby asked her pillow.

And the next morning she was up at

dawn and away on one of her furious rides.

Clarence loitered about the house all the forenoon, waiting for her reappearance. When Miss Purdy informed him lifelessly that the girl was as likely as not to be gone all day, he was deeply depressed. He was also considerably agitated in his sense of the proprieties. Did her family think it was wise for a young girl like that to be off all day, no one knew where? Think of all the things that might happen to her—think of tramps and rattlers and lamed horses and lost trails! Why, it was dreadful!

But Miss Purdy declined to become excited. Bobby, she opined, understood her horse and knew her trails; and there were no tramps; and as for rattlers, what preventive was it against them to have two persons instead of one abroad? So that, unable to arouse any alarm as to Bobby's absence, Clarence went to the corral, saddled the horse—not Hellion—on which Bobby had been teaching him the arts of equestrianism, and jogged disconsolately off, up toward Beaver's Dam. And though he felt very blue—unaccountably blue—he had no glimmer of the reason; he told himself that the life of the wild was beginning to pall, and that he was pinning for one of the shaded-candle suppers of "the biggest and best hotel between New York and Chicago."

A little off the trail, high up on the mountainside, he found her. He saw her horse, hobbled, before he saw her. The sight of the riderless beast for a moment made his heart stand still with fright. Then he caught a glimpse of the slim little figure stretched beneath a pine. His heart leaped up. He forgot his longing for the stimulation of city life, for his city's imitations of metropolitanism. He called to her, and, as she propped herself on her elbow and faced him, he rode in.

"Why!" he exclaimed in consternation, when he had slipped from his

horse. "Why—why, Bobby—Miss Watrous—you've been crying!"

"I have not!" answered Bobby furiously.

"Won't you tell me what is the matter?" he begged, overlooking her denial.

Bobby told him, more furiously, that nothing was the matter. Then he sat down beside her. The sky was very blue above them, the air was full of the wine of balsamic odors, the ground was starred with bright flowers. Clarence discovered in himself a new emotion—the love of nature.

"My, but it's bully!" he exclaimed, sniffing the fragrance of the day.

"You don't really like it," said Roberta positively.

"Don't I? What do I like, then?" He looked straight into her brown eyes, and was conscious of still another new sensation. His heart was beating a little unevenly, and he found looking into Roberta's eyes an intoxicating joy.

"You like," she told him, "going to supper with the woman in a big velvet hat and bare shoulders, and going abroad to buy—blouses!" She flung it at him as if she were accusing him of finding his enjoyment in forging checks or boiling infants in oil.

The strange thing was that the flood of joy and daring that had been rising high in him suddenly subsided at her words. The sky grew gray, the air was stifling. Bobby's eyes—Bobby's eyes might not be looked into. For Bobby's jealous, self-revealing words had recalled Clarence to himself. Why, he owed Mame Green everything! She had made him socially! But for her, he might never have known how to use an oyster fork, or how to order a meal in a restaurant in such a way as to impress a waiter. He might never have seen John Drew, or cared about the creases in his trousers. He might not have been able to give an impersonation,



He tossed his letter over the railing into her lap. "Read it! Read it!" he cried excitedly.

satisfactory to himself, of his favorite character—a well-known "man about town." He owed Mame everything, and he was quite aware that Mame expected payment. They were not engaged—no, but he knew what Mame expected; he had always expected the same thing, assumed it, planned for it. And now—now he hated it.

Bobby, watching him, waiting hopelessly for his words of indignant protest, saw the procession of changes across his face; watched the swift fading of the mischievous challenge with which he had flung his last speech to her; and saw gravity, coldness, hardness—a sort of dullness of desperation—gradually steal across his features.

"You see! You see!" she cried accusingly, when his looks and his silence had told her that she had struck home with her gibe. And then the set expression on his face broke. She thought, for a moment, that he was going to cry, like a girl—to cry as she had been crying half the morning—but he didn't. He stood up and pulled himself together.

"I can't say anything," he told her. "I— Oh, Bobby, don't let me say anything! I don't want to be a cad!"

Then Bobby grew up, all in a moment, as little girls sometimes do. She stood up, too, and she looked at him as mothers look at their sons, with protection and love.

"It's all right," she told him. "Don't say anything. I—understand. I— Oh, truly, I'm glad that—that you want to be all right in everything, as well—as well as in—your clothes!" And she broke into a half-sobbing laugh at the end of her remarkable speech. He took it seriously enough.

"I do," he told her. "I do want to be correct all through—and—and——"

Then he dug his spurs into his horse and rode ahead that she might not see the self-pity that threatened to engulf his eyes.

III.

Dirk rode up with the mail bag. Bobby, clad in a pink-sprigged white lawn, with bronze slippers showing beyond its hem, with her locks coerced into the most charming order, received it from him. There was a letter on superfine stationery, in a feminine hand, addressed to Mr. Clarence Magee. Bobby grew pale beneath her tan as she saw it.

"I think Mr. Magee and dad are getting ready to ride to the round-up," she informed the mail bearer. "Perhaps you'd better take their letters to them, Dirk, down at the corral."

Then she settled down to read her own mail. It consisted largely of samples of materials from Chicago stores. She looked at them with lackluster eyes and let them slip from her fingers.

"What's the use?" said Bobby.

And there, still oppressed by the sense of the uselessness of effort, Clarence, by and by, found her. It was an excited Clarence. He rode up from the corral on a gallop. He had a handkerchief tied about his neck, without the slightest regard for harmonious color effects, and his sombrero had lost its look of aggressive newness. He gave a whoop, and, as Bobby raised her eyes, he tossed his letter over the railing into her lap.

"Read it! Read it!" he cried excitedly.

And Bobby read.

She read that Mame Green hoped he would not consider that she was acting unfairly when she told him her intention of setting up with some one else the small importing shop of which they had sometimes talked as a joint venture. She would always regard him—Clarence—warmly, as a friend; but the vagaries of the human heart were manifold, and love went where it listed. He—the other gentleman—had had years of experience in the very sort of business, and he was sure that the time was ripe to open in—"the most *recherché* importing shop between New York and Chicago." She hoped there would be no hard feelings—which was a drop into the vernacular—but Clarence would recall that she was not in any way bound to him; and she hoped to see him soon at her new home; and he—the other he—was prepared to love Clarence as a brother.

Clarence was on the piazza when Bobby finished reading it. He was standing close beside her, he was leaning over her chair. Bobby felt panic—delicious, happy panic. She sprang from her chair; her brown hands were pressed against the bosom of her pink-sprigged frock. But Clarence caught them and held them.

"Bobby," he cried masterfully—and she adored his masterfulness—"you don't think that I'm a silly, make-believe dude, do you—a sissy?"

"Not any more than you think I'm a slattern and a tomboy," answered Bobby challengingly. And then he kissed her.

After a long time she said:

"Do you know, I think she's awfully pretty, your Miss Green?"

"Sure! Mame is a good sort," he replied generously. And then habit went on: "I owe— Oh, hang it! No, I don't, either!" declared Mr. Magee, emancipating himself.

The Passing of Tubby

(By) Lee Pape



Author of "The Realist," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY R. EMMETT OWEN

GLASSES" eyed the lumbering truck over the tops of his big, gold-rimmed spectacles. It was a great temptation, greater for what hung in the balance. For, if he were caught once more misusing his skates by "hooking on behind," there would be no two weeks' vacation at Atlantic City, though Sid Berry, from his hospitable "cottage" on the sands, sprained his wrist scrawling, "Wish you were here," on picture post cards. Glasses' father had said so, and Glasses' father never said anything he didn't mean, which may have been one reason why he had so long remained political boss of the twentieth ward.

Glasses slowly worked his legs like scissor blades, while he fought it out—and lost. Smothering his conscience by ramming his cap down over his ears, he gave himself an expert wriggle that shot him lickety-split after the rumbling "hitch." It was then that an amazingly corpulent, blue-uniformed figure darkened the horizon.

"Heck!" thought Glasses, and tacked gracefully. Coasting at top speed along the curb line, he allowed his face to express the information that the street was bare of trucks and policemen. For this particular officer of the law, with loud and hypocritical solicitude for the welfare of the hooker-on, notoriously abused his despotic prerogative of warning, ordering, or violently plucking boys off the backs of hitches.

Glasses coasted to the first corner, poised, megaphoned shrilly, "Tubby-y-y-y!" and was up the intersecting street like lightning. However, he was glad, on reflection, that "Tubby" had rescued him from temptation. Those two weeks in the surf were near and dear.

"Tubby" sighed profoundly and proceeded on his heavy way without even turning his head. It only tickles them the more if you let on you've heard, and you can't very well arrest a boy with nothing to charge except that he called you "Tubby." Even as it was, Tubby's days were nightmares, lest his brother officers should take up the cry. Of course—ignoring his knowledge that Glasses' people always paid for breakages without solicitation—he could follow Glasses until—it wouldn't be long—he smashed a baseball through unfriendly plate glass, and "get" him that way. But that would only bring him, Tubby, a reprimand—perhaps a fine, if Glasses' father chose to make it a personal matter. So there was nothing for Tubby to do but sigh again from the mammoth depths of him and look forward dismally to the long, hot vacation months tortured with his unchallenged nickname.

If there were only some way to get at that devil with the glasses! If only his father were anybody but ward leader! Without him to back them and set them on, the others would be easy;



R. Smith Owen

This particular officer of the law notoriously abused his despotic prerogative of warning, ordering, or violently plucking boys off the backs of hitches.

he was the prime mover, the ringleader, the sting whose removal would render the hornet harmless. And Tubby's heart was heavy within him as he piloted a little girl chum through currents of traffic and acknowledged her shy thanks with only a softening of the brooding little blue eyes that were the only cool spots in his great, red face.

The fellows were gathered around the lamp-post when Glasses spread-eagled to a stop among them. They paid about as much attention to his arrival as a company of insects about an arc light display at an addition to their number, although, in spite of his spectacles, he was generally acknowledged

as their leader. They were loud in discussion, and every so often one or two of those on skates would make a flying detour to the middle of the street, and then swoop back to the argument—very much, too, in the manner of the arc-light tribe. The voice of "Doughey" Schneider—son and heir of the neighborhood baker—was making itself heard:

"I betcha! I betcha! A aer-e-oplane can lick a battleship any day. I betcha any amount o' money!"

"You're crazy!" accused "Puds" Lennert. "How about all them cannons? Where would your ol' aer-e-oplane be with about a million cannon balls whizzin' up after it?"

"Yeh, where?" contributed Bert Levy.

"Dodgin'!" shouted Doughey, with ready inspiration. "Dodgin' every cannon ball an' droppin' down bums right on top o' the battleship an' blowin' it to smithereens. There y'are! A battleship can't dodge, can it?"

"Sure it can!" cried Puds desperately. At this such a general shout was set up in the interest of truth that Puds, repeating somewhat less positively, "You're crazy," subsided.

"An' what's more," pronounced Glasses—as if it had been *his* argument all along—"I'd be the fellah that hangs onto the bottom o' the aer-e-o-plane with one hand an' drops the bums with the other."

"You would like fun!" said Doughey. "Your mother wouldn't let you."

"I wouldn't ask her," returned Glasses, fixing him with such a steady eye that Doughey, though naturally annoyed at this summary usurping of the most heroic position in his aeroplane, dared say no more.

Like other born leaders, Glasses had the knack of manipulating angles so as to catch the most light from great popular issues. He had worked himself up from the ranks—where a boy with spectacles naturally belongs—by virtue of a clarion voice, hard, ready, and active fists, and the bursarship of such privileges of location as are vested in the son of a political boss in time of parades and other police-governed functions.

After they had settled the naval question, they surrounded a hokey-pokey Italian and begged vainly for samples; almost succeeded in engineering a fight between Puds Lennert and a little colored boy who kept denying that he had made faces at anybody; spent a stormy fifteen minutes choosing sides for unlawful street baseball, only to discover that nobody had a ball; followed a burlesque show's advertis-

ing wagon for three blocks in Indian file; and then raced back to Glasses' front steps, with the understanding that the last one back was an old woman.

You can never be quite confident of your dictatorship until the fellows gravitate toward your front steps as the birds fly south. Of course, if your mother objects on principle to front-step encampments, it leaves you rather in the position of a king without a throne. But Glasses' mother, mainly because it insured her own son's frequently being within easy hailing distance, never seriously objected, merely insisting on the observance of a few reasonable rules, such as keeping the soles of your feet off the marble as much as possible, and occupying the bottom steps if you happened to have on skates. So, at various times throughout the day, they settled like flies at her front door, automatically sliding both ways to clear a path down the center of the steps whenever they heard the door open to let some one out.

So they settled now, breathless, while Puds Lennert and "Midge" Tomkins, the tailenders, argued unsoftly as to which was the old woman.

Then there fell a breath-recovering silence, broken when Bert Levy exclaimed:

"Look who's rubberin' down! I bet he thought we was playin' ball!"

There he was—Tubby—motionless at the corner, with his club behind him. He had been known to stand that way for minutes, head slightly lowered, like a cow trying to think, before deciding to resume his official beat and come plodding down the street.

"Gees, he's gettin' fatter every day! He couldn't catch a flea!" scoffed Puds Lennert, who was still smarting under a general impression that he had come in last.

"Member when he chased us for makin' a bonfire an' tripped an' hurt his knees an' walked like a duck for

two days?" chuckled Artie Smythe, with unholy relish.

The ecstatic explosion that followed satisfied Artie that the other young cannibals had not forgotten.

"Aw, he couldn't catch a flea!" Puds Lennert repeated, with a contemptuousness that might have laid him open to the charge of never having tried to catch one.

"He's comin' down," announced Glasses, and chanted with dirgelike solemnity:

"Tub-by, Tub-by,
Walkin' down the street!"

With a rhythmic unity that argued much practice, the rest of them swung in:

"Tub-by, Tub-by,
Shoeser fuller feet!"

Tubby was still so far away that they could be reasonably sure he had not heard. So, to give the thing an element of chance, they waited until his trudging steps had brought him within a hundred yards, and then, all watching Glasses' mouth for a concerted start, they intoned it again, not quite so loudly, perhaps, but still daringly loud.

Eyes on the ground, red face flushed to a painful, mottled unevenness, Tubby stumped past, rendering quite unnecessary their elaborate assumption of bored innocence, though he was subtly, distressingly, aware of it. At that moment, plodding past them without a glance, he could have taken any one of them—Glasses, by choice—hard by the throat and throttled and throttled until the black misery in his heart was appeased.

When he was well beyond them, he heard it again, his too-vivid imagination filling in the gaps:

"Tubby, Tub-by,
Walkin' down the street!
Tub-by, Tub-by,
Shoeser fuller feet!"

Did he not, a dozen times a day, have to pass and repass a glaring brick wall with the hellish quatrain carousing across it in white chalk? Did he not wake up o' nights with the echo of it jeering in his ears? It was no crime to be fat. And if it was, could *he* help it? Dully, he lumbered on, thinking ponderously.

"Did you—see his face!" said Midge Tomkins hesitatingly. "Gee, fellows!" Little Midge, who was always being told by adults that he had his mother's eyes, had not joined in the third chorus.

"Aw, back to Sunday school for you! You better go an' play with the girls!" Glasses flung at him.

The allusion to the girls was an effective barb to this shaft, for, were it not for public opinion, Midge would have been playing with the girls at that very moment. He seemed to understand them better.

"Look't that auto, would you?" he said, to cover his confusion.

A yellow racer, stomach to the ground, streaked past and was gone. Immediately the air was filled with a spirited discussion as to its approximate value, speed, and potential destructiveness.

"Maybe you wouldn' go a-whizzin' if you hooked onto the back o' one o' them with your skates!" "Legs" Mac-Intosh offered with reflective eyes.

"Gees, maybe you wouldn'!" murmured Puds Lennert.

The chorus of rapt "Gees!" that went up at the abstract notion was cut short by Doughy Schneider, who was a very Indian for remembering injuries.

"I bet nobody here's got the nerve to do it!" he challenged. "'S easy enough to brag about hangin' onto the bottom of a aer-e-oplane with one hand an' all that, an' you ain't even got the nerve to hook onto a automobile!"

Doughy had taken care not to look



They almost succeeded in engineering a fight between Puds Lennert and a little colored boy who kept denying that he had made faces at anybody.

at anybody in particular when he delivered this apparently general broadside, but, none the less, Glasses felt himself the target. He regarded Doughy over the tops of his spectacles.

"Oh, is 'at so?" he fired back. "Well, if my father didn't say I couldn't go to 'Tlantic City if I got caught again catchin' on behind, I'd hook onto the next auto that went past, if it was goin' a thousan' miles a minute!"

Doughy's speckled blue eyes sparkled as he launched his torpedo.

"Well," he said slowly, "considerin'

you said you wouldn't ask your mother about hangin' on the bottom o' the aer-e-o-plane, you're gettin' mighty p'tic'lar all of a sudden!"

This brought a titter, and Glasses, who knew that leaders can't afford to be tittered at, charged desperately.

"Well, I'll do it anyhow! 'F any guy here's got the nerve to follow me, I'll hook onto the next auto that goes past."

All of them except four lamented profusely that they were not equipped with skates. Of the equipped four, "Skinny" Whipple was sorry to announce that one of his rollers was un-



They found him sitting on the curb opposite Schnerr's drug store, pressing his cap to his forehead and watching with dazed fascination a dark stain slowly widening between his feet.

trustworthy, Bert Levy regretted to state that his skates needed oiling, Artie Smythe declared positively that he would if Skinny and Bert would, and "Reds" Shuster, not being of an inventive turn, professed, after a few moments of fruitless concentration, that *he* wasn't afraid to follow.

"There!" crowed Doughey. "*He'll* follow you!"

"*He'll* follow you!" echoed Skinny and Bert and Artie with an animation that more than made up for any previous backwardness.

"An' here comes one now!" sighted Doughey. "*Now* let's see you!"

A great black limousine was gliding down the street, swift and noiseless as a bird. Every eye was on Glasses,

every eye expectant. And that peerless leader, jeopardizing his own future happiness that his liegemen might not be disappointed, never wavered—outwardly. Rising with regal simplicity to his skates by placing a hand on the two nearest shoulders, he allowed the natural slope of the pavement to jolt him to the curb. The limousine was almost abreast.

In response to verbal encouragement and pokes behind from all sides, Reds Shuster had also risen to his skates and slowly joined Glasses.

"*Now!*" rose the chorus from the steps, and Glasses, with one wild, practiced look that took in the three stories of his home—nobody, glory be! was at the windows—catapulted after the

skimming car. At full speed he caught hold; the loud purr of his rollers made the only sound as the car swung around the corner, with Glasses trailing behind.

A long, ecstatic, hero-worshipping "Gee!" went up from the steps; even Doughy couldn't help joining feebly. Then they became aware that Red Shuster was again in their midst.

"Foot slipped," he explained simply, and sat down. But his conscience was working, and after a longish wait he volunteered to skate around and escort the conquering hero home. The idea met with high and instant popular favor. Like a covey of flushed partridges the entire tribe rose from the steps.

They found him sitting on the curb opposite Schnerr's drug store, pressing his cap, in lieu of a handkerchief, to his forehead and watching with dazed fascination a dark stain slowly widening between his feet. His spectacles, curiously twisted, lay in the dust of the street.

Two wildly hallooing figures on skates crashed into Tubby's broad and spreading back.

"Man hurt!" cried Skinny Whipple, perhaps with a dim notion of "Man overboard!" at the back of his head.

Tubby followed them as quickly as he could without running. On the way they explained about the automobile.

"The Patterson kid, heh?" he said, with a grim snap of his little eyes.

They were his only words until the awed semicircle parted and disclosed Glasses still hunched on the curb. There was quite a respectable stain between his feet by this time.

With unavoidable slowness, Tubby allowed his overburdened legs to relax at the knees until he had sunk to Glasses' level. Thus, as a sort of fore-shortened visitation from the sky, his tormentor became aware of him. Glasses' free eye shifted guiltily, and

his legs twitched reflexly at a prompting from the first law of nature.

"Le's see," growled Tubby, and pulled at Glasses' hand until the cap loosened over an ugly gash.

"H'm!" he grunted. "Hospital case."

He straightened arduously. Glasses rose, too, frantically, unsteadily. His clothes were covered with dust, and one skate flapped from his ankle by its strap.

"No! No! Not there! They'll find out, then—home, an' then they won't let me— Oh, please, just let me go home! They'll put some'p'n on it an' it'll be all right!"

"His father tol' him if he got caught catchin' on behind again, he couldn' go to 'Plantic City next week," explained Skinny Whipple.

"Please!" Still hiding half his face with his cap, Glasses pleaded desperately with his visible eye.

Tubby looked down at him for an expressionless moment, and suddenly the bitter, flooding memory of the black hours this boy had caused for him shot the blood apoplectically into his face until in the great, unlovely expanse of red the little, light eyes seemed to catch the heat and break into blaze. And Glasses saw and understood, and a tear of hopelessness slid down his incredibly grimy cheek.

"You might," he whimpered. "You might. You don't have t' take me to the hospital. It won't do *you* any good!"

The excess color slowly left Tubby's face to its own natural, less alarming, red.

"Won't do *me* any good! An' why won't it? You been awful good to me, you have! I owe you lots o' favors, oh, yes! What do you think I am—a stone? Don't you think I got—feelin's?" He had started tensely enough, but toward the end his voice seemed to quiver, and the open-mouthed boys had

the queerest feeling that he might be going to cry.

But it seemed they were mistaken, for suddenly he wheeled on them fiercely and boomed:

"You kids get out o' here—quick!"

They "got out" to the extent of about ten yards, and Tubby turned to Glasses again.

"Now you get up out o' that an' come over t' the box with me, while I ring for the wagon."

Glasses stood up—slowly, for his head really felt quite queer, almost as if it rested on his neck without being really attached. And, somehow, Tubby's face, as it swam behind a sort of swaying haze, seemed suddenly different—redder than a face could possibly be, and about three times as large, with the features all crooked. And Glasses, looking at it like that, felt unexpectedly sorry for it.

"Honest," he murmured drowsily, "I never meant anything. Honest, I——"

The sentence must have finished itself. At least, Glasses never finished it. The next thing he was aware of was the face of Mr. Schnerr, the drug-gist, very close. Mr. Schnerr, a stout man, who owed a large patronage to the fact that he always mysteriously sensed your desire for pennies in the change, was shaking his head at sight of the gash and remarking that something might be done in the patching line, taking care to add, though, that at the hospital Glasses would have had to undergo "stitches."

Then he might not have to go to the hospital, after all! He stole a look at Tubby, but there was still no love in that broad face. There was nothing, especially, but red.

Even without the stitches, Mr. Schnerr hurt like fury, but Glasses didn't cry. Once he might have, but Tubby surprised him so by reaching over and heavily patting his hand that the wickedest shoots of pain were over before he had time to bring his mind back to them. After that—wonder of wonders!—he found it remarkably effective to take tight hold of Tubby's hand and squeeze at crucial moments. When it was all over, Glasses, still with a fearfully dirty face, looked rather like a sporty Hindu with his white turban pushed rakishly over one eye.

"And now, by the way," said Mr. Schnerr, "how'd it happen?"

"He slipped," said Tubby, and conveyed Glasses out to the street again.

The fellows were waiting patiently, talking it over in—for them—low tones. They weren't at all sure that Glasses, as a grand climax, wouldn't be arrested.

"I think I better see you get home all right," said Tubby. "Maybe if I tell your mother you got all that by just slippin', she might believe it."

Glasses tightened his grip on the massive hand, and, quite without warning, was in the midst of his hardest fight to hold back the tears.

"Say," he said—and though he wasn't sure of his voice, he made it purposely loud—"if any o' these kids call you—anything, after this, you—you just let me know!"

A really beautiful smile gave Tubby's face almost the effect of a fine sunset. Then, without another word, the fellows following at a respectful distance, they started for home, Tubby carrying Glasses' skates along with his club in his free hand.



Sunday

By Lucy Stone Keller

Author of "Dear," "Just Letters," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY E. C. CASWELL

BANG!" went the kitchen door. "Spat-spat-spat!" hurried Edith's feet down the back-garden walk. "Rattlety-bang!" shouted the lid of the garbage bucket tumbling to the ground, and "Slam!" as it returned to its place again.

James Willard awoke with a guilty jerk, sat upright in bed, consulted his watch on the little reading table—ten-forty-five—whistled softly, and uttered a plaintive "The devil!" Reaching over, he pulled the dainty white curtains aside to examine professionally the face of his tall, white-aproned wife, whose skirts whisked with formidable rustlings as she hastened up the walk, swinging an empty kettle to the rapid tempo of her singing. And the tune that accompanied her "tum-tum-tum-ta-da-de-da-dum" was the inevitable "Tramp! Tramp! Tramp! The Boys Are Marching"—absolutely the fatal omen, as James well knew.

But seven months of matrimony, with its thirty anything but placid Sundays, had not yet taught him that silence is the better part of valor if one has already omitted the discretion end of it.

"Honey, you *know* I'll do that if you'd only wait," he called out to her in his big, sunny voice.

"I've waited for you to keep your promises for the last time. I've yet to see the time when you've kept your word if it inconvenienced you in the slightest. *Tum-tum-tum-tra-la-la-la.*"

James lay back with another whistle and surveyed the crumpled place his fingers had left on the window hangings

with rueful eyes. Why in thunder couldn't he remember to keep his hands off those curtains? That they would be promptly yanked down and repressed the instant his wife saw them, he was certain; for Edith never allowed her artistic temperament to interfere with her rampant cleanliness.

"Bang!" reiterated the kitchen door. James thrust his feet out in quick response and sat up on the edge of the bed. Just as he reached for his bath robe, a tin pan in the region of the kitchen made a right merry riot in the sink. A sullen flash of resentment chased the guilty grin off his face. He dug under the covers and shut his eyes tight.

But no amount of human will power can produce sleep in the face of such opposition as the steady swish, swish of a broom, the clatter of last night's dinner dishes that were left till morning only at your urgent request and promise of assistance, the muffled but energetic pat-pat of an iron on your own shirts, and finally the pounding of a hammer on nails that you have forgotten all week to drive.

"Good Lord!" grunted James savagely, jumped into his bath robe, ignored his slippers, and put in a disheveled appearance on the back porch, where Edith balanced gingerly on a cracker box, and pounded with ineffectual efforts at a huge nail on which to hang the wash boiler.

"Get off of that!" growled James.

Edith pounded on.

"I suppose when a woman is noth-



"Nothing hit you but the handle," she choked. "You great baby!"

ing but a servant, she may expect to be addressed as such," she retorted freezingly, and landed a fierce blow full on her thumb nail. With a shriek, she dropped the hammer, which completed its havoc square across the top of James' bared toes.

His arms had started to her in quick consolation, but they dropped with a thud as he danced around in profane misery. Stunned, Edith gazed down at him from the height of the cracker box, the blood dripping slowly from

her extended left hand. Then the pain of her thumb eclipsed all sympathy.

"Nothing hit you but the handle," she choked. "You great baby! Oh—I—I simply *hate* you! If I didn't have to do the work of a hired man, it never would have happened. Go 'way!" Sobs.

She fled to the sink and thrust her thumb under the hot water. The reddened stream melted James' heart entirely. He dropped his foot, and limped to her.

"Oh, honey, poor little girl! I'm *so* sorry. I am a beast —"

Edith flashed around on him furiously, a bit white about the lips.

"Did you only discover it because you made me hurt my thumb? I can tell you, James Willard, my thumb don't hurt one-tenth as badly as

all your broken promises—and having to do work the neighbors' maids would leave at the thought of—and having every single Sunday all spoiled. Before I married you——"

But James, after a long, quiet look into her accusing eyes, had limped through the hall into the bedroom and closed the door—very gently. That was the way with James. The deeper he was in the wrong, the sweeter and gentler he acted.

Edith slowly bandaged her thumb,

and completed her mission of the wash-boiler nail before she began getting breakfast. It was eleven-thirty. At twelve, James appeared, garbed in his best blue suit and bedroom slippers.

"Did you bring in the paper, dear?" he inquired from the hall door.

"No. I haven't had time. But as soon as the eggs are cooked, I'll go out and get it for you."

"A-ll right, little E. C. M.," James affably drawled. "E. C. M." was not exactly a term of endearment. The letters stood for "Early Christian Martyr."

Edith made him no reply, and he immediately repented.

"Listen, dear: Suppose we light the fire and talk things all over so we can enjoy breakfast. Leave the darned eggs. Come on! Be a sport!"

"I'm sick of 'talking things over,' as you call it. All you want to do is to convince me that you're right about everything. I just cleaned the grate for the fire to-night. If you had those ashes to clean up every day, you'd be less anxious for a fire on a warm morning. Breakfast's ready."

He limped in behind her, a thoughtful pucker on his lips. Even the breakfast table welcomed antagonism. The toast defied mastication, the jam pot was jammy on the outside, and the eggs were dismal little heaps of separated yolks and whites.

"No waffles this morning?" asked James, with an unloving glance at his two dismal eggs. Next to his hope of being the greatest lawyer in the United States, James hoped for waffles on every Sunday that he lived.

"I couldn't stir waffles hard enough on account of my thumb."

"Why, I'd have stirred them, if you'd asked me. You know it. Now we'll never hear the last of that thumb. I'll wager it can't hold a candle to my toes."

Without further discussion, Edith picked up the toast and eggs, carried

them to the kitchen, and scraped them audibly into the garbage bucket. James hurried after her.

"Oh, I say, Edith, let's cheer up! I'm awfully sorry I said that. Darn the waffles! Poor little girl! Here, you sit down and tell me where to find things, and I'll do the work."

He put the kitchen stool behind her and drew her down on it with a gentle arm. Had Edith been anything less than a lady, the stool undoubtedly would have sailed through the partition and buried itself in the garden. As it was, it merely slid like a streak over the linoleum and made a dint in the plastering upon arriving at the wall.

"Go into the other room, and leave me alone! It's easy enough to talk about being cheerful when you get every single thing just as you want it. Eggs are sixty cents a dozen, and last month's grocery bill isn't paid; but, of course, *we* can afford waffles, if they do take five eggs, even if I haven't a decent pair of shoes nor street-car fare!"

Every available drop of blood in James' body climbed slowly into his face and throat, but he turned silently and went into the living room. Edith, standing motionless, heard him go out for the paper.

At one, the first light-brown waffle was ready. Edith's eyes were swollen and her cheeks redder than roses ever grow.

"*Why* didn't you call me to stir them, Edith? I got to reading, and forgot."

"You knew I was making them. Even Mrs. Lane heard me stirring them, and asked me if I was getting luncheon. You'll have to fry the others yourself. I can't make my thumb stop bleeding—if you'll excuse my speaking of it."

"I *swear*, Edith, I got to thinking, and forgot." James' face was distressed. His voice was more than that.

"I'm *so* sorry, honey!"

"That's all you've said ever since

we were married. Why don't you ever —" But the closing door clipped her question.

James ate his waffle, fried three more pale ones, and drank a cup of cold coffee. Then he propped his elbows on the table edge, and with a fist on either cheek regarded the sugar bowl for ten minutes with eyes that saw nothing but Edith—Edith smiling, laughing, teasing, high-spirited, always happy, Edith as she was before he married her; and then Edith quiet, nervous, weeping, reproachful, furious—Edith, his wife.

At the end of twenty minutes, he heard her clearing away in the kitchen.

"Come in and let me fry your waffles now. These are the best ones we've ever had." Full of fresh determination to repair his mistakes, he limped out to the waffle bowl. It was scraped clean. And Edith's stinging thumb flaunted any pretense at reconciliation.

"I'm not hungry. Please move! I want to light the gas. Besides, you didn't leave enough for me. Go on, it doesn't matter about me."

"Oh, thunder! Starve, then! There was plenty left. I've had nearly all I can stand of this *abused* stuff. You make my Sundays about as homelike as a battlefield."

"I make them—I!"

"Yes, you! What do you leave your ironing until Sunday for—and the week's sweeping—and then expect me to get down on my knees and plead to do it for you? No one knows I haven't given you very much better than I do. If you'd have let me do as I wanted to, I'd have sold that oil land when I had the chance, and we wouldn't have been so hard up. But it's a cinch you've had as much as I have. My hat looks like a last year's bird's nest, and my suits have got flatiron patterns all over them. Mother *never* had a maid, and she did four times as much as you do, and I

never heard a word of complaint in my life. She and dad always went out together Sunday, and——"

That Edith was listening quietly to his outburst surprised him at last into silence. She waited a minute and then said evenly:

"Are you quite finished?" Her voice had lost its sharp twang, but it trembled. "Well, James, the reason I left my ironing is because on Friday the electricity was turned off and you wanted to go to Martins' in the evening. Yesterday, you asked the Deans to dinner, so I had to clean and cook all day, and I didn't get my picture done for the exhibit—but, of course, that doesn't matter. And I swept this morning because the rugs were covered with popcorn that you strewed around. I wouldn't have left it all; but you promised you *would* get up early and take me to church this morning——"

"By Jove! Church never entered my head till this minute. Why didn't you remind me?"

"I'm worn out with reminding you. And as far as your mother is concerned, I suppose she did her complaining to your father. Besides, she didn't have any other work in her life but her family. That's different. You knew I had my painting when you married me. I didn't expect to marry into the position of hired girl—or I'd have specialized for it."

"No," said James slowly, "and I didn't expect to have you. I guess you're right about it. I'll let Wilson go in the office and send a maid up here to-morrow. You ought to have kept Ellen."

"You know you can't get along without Mr. Wilson."

"Oh, yes, I can," a bit wearily. "I can get along without anything better than to have things go on like this. If I'd had any idea business was going to be so rotten, I never on earth would have asked you to marry me."

His tone was penitent, but hurt, anticipatory of a consoling reply. But none came. Edith rinsed the percolator with exceeding care, holding her thumb at a piteous angle that somehow irritated James into quick anger.

"Just the same, the right sort of wife ought to be willing to do her part when a chap has hard luck. You strive your hardest to make me feel like a murderer. What in thunder did you expect, Edith, when you married me?"

Edith dried a cream pitcher thoroughly, and looked him square in the eyes.

"I don't think, James," she deliberated, "I don't think I ever half-expected to be anywhere near as happy as I have been, even if we do fight most of the time."

With this inexplicable bit of information, she returned to the dishpan. James wilted. He gulped for his voice, and finally found it.



"Oh, Edith," he greeted her happily, "I've asked the Kings over for cake and coffee."

"Honest, I *do* try, honey!" he began humbly, very like a big, penitent school-boy, but his apology was interrupted by two soap-sudsy hands tight about his neck, and two warm lips hard against his.

"I know you try, you darling." Kiss. "And I *did* do a lot of work just to make you ashamed of lying in bed so long." Kiss. "I don't know why I'm so horrid when all the time I—I just

love you to death every minute." Tearful kiss.

James patted her back with the towel-draped saucer.

"There, there! You're all tired and nervous. I'll go out and put some water in the radiator, and we'll take a spin around the lake." He flung the tea towel over the rack, but paused at the door to say earnestly:

"But I tell you, Edith, we must stop this quarreling. It's wearing deeper all the time. And it's *so* silly."

Flash—she was back in his arms again, laughing, but still a little trembly around her lips.

"I know it, Jim. But—but it does make me so raging furious to have you sit around and luxuriate while I work. I can't help it. It isn't the work that I mind; but I do think you ought to help Sundays. Even if you just muss around and bother, it makes me feel better inside."

There could be no denying it—James was not fond of housework. He gave a guilty glance at the pile of pans he had been about to desert for the more manly task of filling the radiator, hunted up Edith's lips again, and returned to the tea towel.

At two-thirty, the dishes were conquered. James departed for the garage and Edith flew to the bedmaking, which she accomplished with one grand sweep of covers. In fifteen minutes, she was dressed, hatted, and gloved, very dignified and good to see. There were no sounds of life in the garage, so she sped down the back walk, woefully certain of finding James and his best blue suit under the dirtiest place in the car, catching all the drip. Not so! James sat rakishly a-tilt the back fence, arguing heatedly on the subject of kaisers and kings with young Mr. King across the alley.

"Oh, Edith," he greeted her happily, "I've asked the Kings over for cake and coffee. Tom and I'll run down-

town and get some ice cream, while you and Mrs. King fix the eats. We can take our ride this evening."

"Why, of course," cordially to Mr. King, without looking again at James. "Does your wife know?"

Mrs. King did *not* know, so her husband went in at once to deliver the invitation. Somehow, Edith's dignity seemed to wilt away, leaving only a big little girl with a hurt face. She had wanted that spin along the lake very badly. She had planned to have one of their "real talks" as they rode along, and to tell James of her big hopes about her last pictures, which old Mr. Hale had almost promised to buy.

Edith's painting and ambition were not the weighty matters to James that they were to her. The Edith of *his* dreams did not pace proudly through a hall of fame hung with canvases of her own creation. She sat by a fireside surrounded by an indefinite number of babies, mostly boys, her face sweet and wonderfully gentle.

Edith, knowing this, seldom mentioned her "life work"; but this afternoon's drive had seemed a most propitious moment. She was keenly disappointed. She turned slowly back to the house, stripping off her gloves as she went. James, watching her from the garage door, suddenly remembered that Edith was not especially congenial with Mrs. King, whose deepest desire in life was to embroider a perfect scallop around a dresser scarf. He whistled regretfully, and bounded in to explain how it was that he had got interested talking, and had blurted out the invitation unthinkingly.

Edith had already slipped back into her dainty white house dress, and was breaking sixty-cent eggs into a bowl for his favorite little gold cakes.

"Didn't you have any cakes on hand?" he asked somewhat timidly, after an enlightening silence.

"No."

"Do you mind having them over for a little while?"

"Yes."

"Oh! Well, I'm sorry. I thought it would be nice to have a little visit and some music. I don't understand why you don't like her, Edith."

Silence. "Whir" from the egg beater.

"I'll make an excuse when he comes over, and you can have your ride."

"I should have no pleasure in the ride now. Mr. King is out there waiting for you."

"Very well." And the kitchen door uttered its accustomed Sunday bang behind him.

The Kings departed at five-fifteen, after a highly satisfactory afternoon. Mrs. King had reveled through every conceivable piece of music, between the limits of "He's a Devil in His Own Home Town" and the "Maiden's Prayer," while Edith sat on a straight-backed chair and looked out of the window. James had grown vaguely uncomfortable. Immediately the door closed upon their guests, he suggested breezily:

"Just time for a good spin before dark. I'll help you with the dishes when we get back. Say, those cakes were the best ever. Give me a kiss."

"Ouch! You're pulling my hair, James. I don't wish to go now, thank you. Mr. Hale is coming to call at seven."

"What! Why, we told the Martins we'd come up there early. That old foggy'll stay till morning."

"Mr. Hale is anything but an old foggy. It's a great compliment to me that he even takes an interest in my work. He's an authority on landscapes. Mr. Cane says he has the best collection in the country. And he leaves for New York to-morrow, so there is only to-night left."

"Be a jolly evening talking high-brow to that old moneybags! What are

you going to do about the Martins? You promised."

"And if I did? Why should all my promises be kept, and all of yours broken? You've broken your word to me three times just to-day." And balancing four coffee cups on top of the cake plate, she backed through the swinging door into the kitchen.

Dishes began to clink right merrily in the sink. James picked up the Sunday paper, glared savagely at the funny pictures, tossed it on the window seat with a disgusted grunt, and strode out to the back porch.

"I've got some work to do on the car," he mumbled on his way through the kitchen.

"Are you taking the car downtown in the morning?"

"I am. Any objections?"

"Oh, no! If you prefer gasoline to groceries, I suppose it should not concern me. Other men can ride on the street car, whose wives have as many as two pairs of boots and money to go to a concert occasionally."

The rush of red entirely routed the sullen anger from James' face, leaving a line of white about his tight lips. That was where Edith had him cornered, trapped. Until six months before, he had never differentiated between poverty and disgrace. He had gone into matrimony assented with a splendid brain, considerable property, a fine library, and a law practice of which any one might be proud. So they had happily distributed his bank account between a delightful wedding trip and wobbly, antique furniture. And then clients had simply ceased to exist, and taxes loomed huge and unavoidable in their stead. People preserved even their domestic woes for settlement until after the European war. Once Edith had been without a nickel for car fare.

So what could a man say? He latched and unlatched the screen door three times before he opened it and



"Then permit me to say, Mrs. Willard, that I consider you a truly great woman."

went silently out to the garage, where he stretched himself out in the back seat of the car and gazed disconsolately at the ceiling; while back in the kitchen a flood of repentant tears rained into the steaming dishpan.

But at seven, upon the arrival of Mr. Hale, tears were dried, thumbs neatly rebandaged, troubles kissed away, and domestic happiness as cheerfully apparent as the happy, crackling fire.

The handsome, white-haired old millionaire bestowed but little more attention on James than he did on the fire tongs, but addressed Edith in a fatherly manner, brimful of admiration, that

surprised James into an awkward silence. After a few polite minutes they left him to his newspaper and went into the little den off the living room that Edith had converted into a studio. James, feeling neglected and unappreciated, buried himself in his newspaper, but no human husband could help overhearing such stray bits as:

"My dear young woman, this is masterly work—*masterly!* How long has it taken you? That hill makes me actually long to climb it and look over on the other side."

"I have done it in less than three weeks, Mr. Hale—and then only in be-

tween ironing and sweeping and dish-washing; often when I was almost tired to death."

James felt the stern hand of shame pushing him down in his chair until only his ears stuck out. *He* was the demon who had permitted this sacrilege. He had scarcely known there was a hill in the picture, much less felt any desire to climb it. And while he had employed a stenographer in the office to take down a scattering note occasionally, Edith had been scrubbing the kitchen floor. His cheeks burned. But his shoulders revived in surprise at the old aristocrat's response:

"Then permit me to say, Mrs. Willard, that I consider you a truly great woman. It takes real genius, burning and alive, to surmount obstacles *pleasantly* and do work like this. I seldom speak of my wife, Mrs. Willard. The memory is too tender. It is my greatest sorrow that she could not live for the pleasures I could give her now. Some day I hope you may see the wonderful landscape she painted the first year we were married. We were very poor then—*very* poor, and she was obliged to do all her painting 'in between times,' as you say."

James almost gasped with relief. The old man's words fell like soothing raindrops in a burning desert, and continued with further solace:

"But she was always cheerful—happy and contented, just as I can see that you are, when all the time I knew that I was holding her back from a remarkable career. But never once was there a word of complaint. You remind me of her greatly, Mrs. Willard, greatly."

He coughed huskily, and there followed a silence in the den, during which James slipped into the hall, pulled his hat well down to his ears, tiptoed out of the door, and swung into the long, restful strides of a man who needs nothing so much as a good nerve-soothing walk.

When, after twenty minutes, he sneaked in again, Mr. Hale was leaving, his chauffeur standing in the narrow hall holding a flat, thin packet in his hand.

"Why, James, where in the world did you go?" greeted Edith.

"Oh, I'm awfully sorry——" James started guiltily at his old phrase and changed it to a stiff "I regret very much to seem so rude, Edith, but I thought I'd take a little walk while you were talking. I had no idea you were not staying the evening, Mr. Hale."

The old man surveyed him with a cordial scrutiny that carried with it a fatherly understanding.

"I'd like nothing better, Mr. Willard, I assure you, but I'm catching this late train. I hope to know you better soon. Mr. Sterne tells me you have done some very keen legal work, and I have a little matter I wish to put in your hands on my return. And may I congratulate you on this wife of yours? For I know that nothing in all the world can compare with a pleasant, happy woman to come home to. Mrs. Hale has been dead forty-one years, and I have only been able to live through them because of the memory of her—her cheer—and sweetness. Oh, yes, I—I assure you, Mr. Willard—I assure you——"

But a choking in his throat made his assurance incoherent, and he hurried down the steps blowing his nose loudly, followed by his open-mouthed, hugely astonished man, to whom such a revelation from his quiet old master was as a bomb from a blue sky.

Edith and James stood silent on the porch until the last purr of the machine had emptied into the darkness. Then they went inside and stood before the fire together.

"Oh, James," said Edith, "I never was so ashamed in all my life. And I've been such a cat to you all the time. Won't you help me out a little?"

And James "helped her out" with two big, gentle arms and two very tender lips.

"Did he take—I mean did he buy your picture?" he whispered, a faint hope of a negative in the words in spite of himself.

"Un-huh," whispered Edith, and, putting aside his arms, she brought the check out and handed it to him.

Eight hundred and seventy-five dollars! The figures shot up at him like little arrows. That was more money than he had made in three months. His brain smothered him with accusations. Edith scrubbing, driving wash-boiler nails—— He was bitterly ashamed.

"Now you can have some clothes. I'm so glad! I'm s-o-o glad! I shouldn't have married you. I'm——"

He caught his words up like a worn-out machine. Edith stared at him with wide, troubled eyes. The expression on James' face was not pleasant to see. His mouth and eyes were dreadfully, dreadfully hurt.

"James!" cried Edith shrilly. She snatched the tiny paper and flung it on the live coals, gasped as it flared into

flame, and threw her arms about his neck.

"Oh, please don't look like that, James," she choked. "I don't want the old money. I don't mind being poor. I like it. I want to be poor. I don't want anything but just you. I'm so ashamed—and——"

"Why, honey, honey!" marveled James, his eyes shining into the fire, full of a man's hard tears and a great gladness. He smiled down at the blackened film that had been eight hundred and seventy-five dollars and drew her down into the big chair.

At midnight they discovered that the fire had burned away and left them, but the comradely understanding that each one saw in the other's eyes was a far happier thing than any fire. They had decided to write Mr. Hale for another check, and some day to tell him all about it.

"The poor old man!" said James pityingly. "I tell you, Edith, I'll get up early next Sunday morning, if I have to sit up all night to do it!"

"Next Sunday morning," corrected Edith, "we'll sleep till ten—and maybe till eleven."

A MOCKING BIRD

NO organ tune, ground tediously,
Is his, this prince of song;
An *improvisatore* he,
Whose bright airs flit along
Chance driven. So silvery one is strung
You half could think it born
Of gossamers the light wind stirs
Upon the grass at morn.
A sheep bell's clink has surely found
That fine, attentive ear
To make him ring that shallow sound
That should have chimed so clear.
But what inspired this cluck of pride
Save a remembered breast
And wings fluffed wide, the more to hide
Four babies in a nest?

ALICE NEAL.

In Milady's Boudoir

By Doctor Lillian Whitney

Dr. Whitney is always glad to answer all reasonable questions relating to beauty and health, but she cannot undertake to answer letters which fail to inclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope for reply, or to letters inclosing Canadian stamps. Every week she receives many letters of this sort, in spite of the notice always printed at the end of this department. Sometimes, even, the post office sends notification that letters are being held for her, which careless writers have posted with no stamp. If you have failed to receive a reply to your letter, you may know that it is for one of these three reasons.—EDITORS.

EVERY woman should have a boudoir. It need not necessarily be a large room, gorgeously decorated and luxuriously fitted up, to answer its purposes. It may be a tiny nook which she reserves absolutely to herself, and in which she can, safe from inquisitive—even though perhaps affectionate—eyes, perform those intricate and delicate rites of the toilet that are peculiarly feminine.

Milady's boudoir should reflect her personality. It does not follow, because she has entered the domain of the professions or the trades, or mayhap has become a citizen of the world, that she has lost her love of pretty and dainty surroundings, or those highly essential necessities to her beauty upon which she has depended for centuries. Quite the contrary. The woman of today is, if anything, in greater need of these accessories than ever before, because she is more in the limelight, and also because her many activities would have a tendency to age her prematurely did she not avail herself of every means to preserve her superficial charms and also of the opportunity that a boudoir affords to repose and compose body and mind, thereby conserving her health and strength.

Amid her personal belongings, surrounded by the things she loves to gaze

upon, in an atmosphere that she alone has created and that reflects herself, she is enabled to take account of stock, to catch up with herself, as it were, and, if she be so inclined, to cheat Father Time of a decade or two. Nothing delights a woman more than to feel that she is successfully doing this. Nature may be very good to her, and withhold a finger print here and there, but she almost always credits herself with some rare and unusual, some indefinable, quality of which her less fortunate sisters have somehow been deprived; some youthful attribute by means of which she can keep the world guessing regarding that which most women seek to repudiate after twenty-five—her age.

The boudoir, or dressing room, then, should reflect her personality, be fitted up in the colors she likes best and that are most becoming to her. Ivory white and rose is a beautiful combination; French gray, with pale lavender or French blue, is liked by some; a combination of orchid shades, with old gold and deep pink, is very beautiful. Simplicity should really mark this resting place and beauty bower, so it requires no great financial outlay, although fortunes are spent in extravagant fixings with which to decorate my lady's boudoir.

Cleanliness must, of course, be the

chief characteristic, and, therefore, the fittings for the dressing table should be severely plain. The most inexpensive articles comprising everything a fastidious woman might desire for her dressing table are now made of *ivortone*, a celluloid imitation of genuine ivory. These can be cleaned as often as necessary, involving no labor and little time.*

Dainty and in exquisite taste is the present fad of carrying out a perfume scheme in all one's toilet preparations. Thus, violet, rose, or heliotrope, or any scent, distinguishes the soap, face powder, bath crystals, toilet waters, creams, and sachets. When the color of the perfume—rose, violet, and so forth—is further extended to the colorings of the room, the entire arrangement is very charming.

By the way, it is amazing how little attention is given the education of children on questions of individual sanitation and beauty. Every child should be possessed of individual toilet articles, be taught their proper use, and how to keep them in order, and instilled with the advantages of such practices. Given the wherewithal, dainty scents and pleasing colorings, a love for cleanliness and beauty is early ingrained in the child's nature.

All the accessories of milady's toilet should be kept in her boudoir, not only her toilet preparations, but her dress appointments. Boxes for veils, gloves, handkerchiefs, and the hundred-and-one essentials required by the up-to-date woman are a tenfold necessity, as nothing is so destructive to the life of these highly important and expensive "side issues" of woman's toilet as throwing them pell-mell into dresser drawers, where they quickly become a

confused jumble, from which it taxes one's nerves and time to extricate them when they are wanted. Their care is even more necessary than that of toilet preparations, as these are well protected in glass bottles or porcelain jars. Here, as in the art of preserving and enhancing personal charms, American women are behind their European sisters. It is not necessary to possess boxes of sandalwood, receptacles of Spanish leather, and the like, exquisite and alluring as they are, in which to keep one's folderols. Any pasteboard box may be transformed, by a woman so inclined, with bits of cretonne or silk, a little padding, and sachet powder, into adorably scented nests in which to tuck away laces, frills, trinkets, gloves, and so forth. When needed, they delight the senses with their fresh crispness and seductive sweetness.

In the matter of hair, too, American women have learned much from foreign hairdressers. The English lead the world in this respect, and the most perfect imitations of natural pieces come to us from London, or are made here by Englishmen. Women no longer feel it a disgrace to wear artificial hair, but very sensibly regard any help toward the development of a becoming coiffure as an essential part of the toilet. The apparently simple modes of dressing the hair that have prevailed for the past year have been a positive boon to many, and it is to be hoped that years will elapse before heavy coiffures are again in vogue.

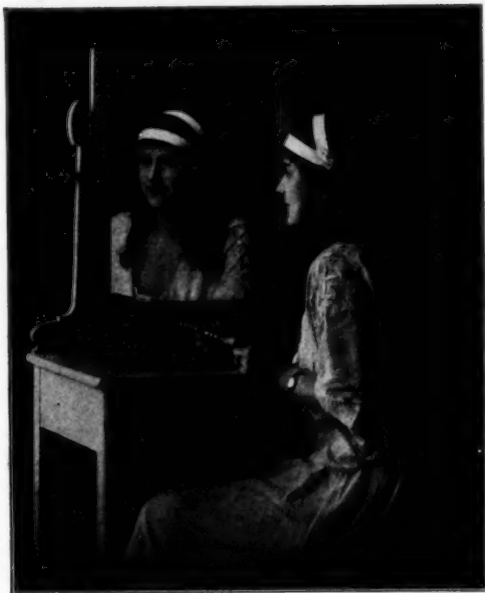
At the present day, the demands of the moment call for "top pieces," and this especially is where the English hair makers excel. These top pieces are made in such close imitation of one's own hair that detection is impossible. Fashioned of the best grade either of naturally wavy or water-waved hair, and, if made to individual order, following the contour of the head and the hair growth upon the forehead, they

*To clean ivory or ivortone, rub any stains with lemon juice, then with whiting that has been made into a paste with lemon juice. Allow this to dry on and, when perfectly dry, wipe off with a soft cloth.

constitute a convenience and an addition to one's needs that many women feel they can under no circumstances do without. These top pieces add so much to the comfort, pleasure, and beauty of the *head* that they deserve to become better known. Even a small piece, made of combings and mingled with one's own hair, is a great convenience, as it can be adjusted at a moment's notice, and does away with the use of irons and crimpers. When not in use, these pieces also should be kept in perfumed receptacles; when allowed to lie around, they accumulate dust and germs, and become tangled, faded, and unsightly. Perfume not only scents hair, but preserves it from moths and other insects.

Those who do not require a *postiche*—or additional hair piece—and whose growth is abundant, but distressingly straight, will find the following simple method of waving it a great convenience: The hair is slightly moistened with sugar water, Cologne water, or a thin, mucilaginous solution of gum arabic or quince seed; it is then pushed forward into points or two ripples, and fastened down with a broad tape fillet. When dry, the hair falls into a natural wave.

These tape or ribbon fillets are quite becoming. No woman should allow herself to be seen with hair unkempt or done up in crimpers. Here is where the boudoir cap comes into excellent use; these generally becoming little conveniences cover a multitude of hair sins. A boudoir cap is not supposed to be anything but what its name indicates—a cap to be worn in one's boudoir or bedroom. Bewitching affairs to match



Bandoline and a tape fillet give the hair a natural wave.

the dressing gown are frequently worn to breakfast in the absolute privacy of one's own home, but never at other times. When tiny sachet bags are tucked into the lace and ribbon frills, they serve the further purpose of scenting the hair. There is something particularly seductive, especially to the male mind, in the perfume that is wafted to him from a woman's hair. A popular writer of the moment alludes to this in one of his recent stories. "I did not know a woman's hair could be so sweet," says the hero.

In the seclusion of her boudoir, attention can freely be given to the subjugation of those inevitable marks of time—faded and discolored skin and wrinkles. It is the exceptional woman who carries a naturally pure and delicately tinted skin into the thirties; and as to white necks—unless artificially produced—they are indeed a rarity.

Frequent allusions have been made in these papers to the tremendous influence of the intestinal tract upon the outer skin. All the bleaching agents at our command will not correct discolorations caused by continual indiscretions in diet and the like. The yellow, coarse appearance of the neck so often complained of is, however, in most in-



A little "make-up" adds a harmless touch.

stances, the result of neglect of the body and of carelessness in dress. Many women accord the neck scant attention, giving it some thought only when its glaring imperfections are thrown into bold relief by contact with a color they have not worn since girlhood, or when some occasion necessitates the donning of an evening frock. The finest soap is none too good for the neck. The following makes a soap of rare excellence for this purpose:

Mix very finely one pound of the purest Castilian soap; cover this with cold water in an earthen dish, which is placed in a water bath or strainer; as soon as the mass is melted, stir in one-half pound of oatmeal, and set away to cool. When cold, it can be cut into blocks and allowed to harden. In its warm, soft state, this mixture is ad-

mirable for scrubbing the neck and ridding it of all accumulated soil and impurities. Repeat several times with fairly hot water until the desired object is really accomplished. Then cover the parts with a fine paste made of one ounce of strained honey, one teaspoonful of lemon juice, six drops of oil of bitter almonds, the whites of two eggs, and enough fine oatmeal to spread the mass on old linen or cotton cloth about three inches wide, which is placed like a bandage around the neck. It can be left in position as long as desirable. If this treatment is pursued every day for a week, a marvelous transformation takes place, and from a "heavy" yellow unsightliness, the neck becomes "passing fair." It is well worth the trouble.

This treatment does not pertain to the face, the skin of which is more delicate. The Beauty Water referred to in a previous number is a desirable wash to use for complexion purposes; an old handkerchief can be saturated with it and laid over the face, masklike, while waiting for the neck bleaching to take effect.

The time is also propitious for a study into the causes of wrinkles, furrows, and lines upon the forehead, especially lines caused, by stormy tem-

peraments. It is an excellent thing to contemplate oneself in one's private sanctuary and read there what the years and the development of one's inner nature have traced upon the countenance. Many of these wrinkles are not character lines, and such as are not can be erased, to a great extent, by patience and the remolding, sometimes, of traits that find expression in facial contortions which, after the lapse of time, ruin the prettiest face. Such silent contemplation and appraisal of oneself can do more than all the cosmetics and all the plasters in the world toward affecting that smoothness and placidity of the brow which are so rarely seen in maturity; indeed, it is this very lack of smoothness that creates the impression of prematurity in many, many women.

Why is it that this noble feature is given so little attention? Why, indeed? Space forbids a tempting digression upon this subject, which must await a future occasion. Meanwhile, it is sufficient to say that facial grimaces which destroy the beauty and outline of the forehead, together with the furrows and wrinkles they create, can, to a large extent, be eradicated by wearing plasters in the seclusion of one's boudoir and during sleep. The crinkled skin must, of course, be treated first with creams and smoothed out with hot water and a ball of absorbent cotton, followed by an astringent lotion, which should be patted on. Strips of court-plaster should then be applied to the tautly held skin, in the opposite direction to that in which the lines run.

The question is often asked: Is a woman justified in "making up"? There can be no two answers to this, because without doubt the judicious use of cosmetics is a great aid to beauty. There are many sins committed upon the complexion, sins of omission as well as of commission. Some women err in never "touching up," when a sus-

picion of rouge and a dusting of powder would transform them into beauties. Others err in applying it as thickly as a painter daubs colors on his canvases. Apropos of a celebrated social scandal, a wag remarked that such matters become crimes only when they are found out, and so it is with cosmetics, the French declaring that one must use rouge, but—under no circumstances permit its detection! So rouge discreetly, as well as with discrimination.

American women do not require much "make-up." With the improvement in physique that is gradually taking place in our women, a fresh, clear complexion will soon be the rule and not the exception. When it is desirable to "make up," the process must not be hurried. A heavy daub of rouge injudiciously applied may harden the features and raise the cheek bones, instead of softening the effect. It is best to experiment with oneself in order to find out just what one's individual needs are in this respect. Liquid rouge is not harmful, as it has an astringent effect, whereas dry rouge is not only apparent to all, but enlarges the pores, as well. The color of the rouge used should also be considered. No natural complexion is ever as red as that of undiluted rouge. A bit of absorbent cotton should be moistened at the mouth of the rouge bottle and allowed to dry; several such should be made ready for use. When needed, dip in cold water and rub over the cheeks, thus imparting a faint tinge to the skin, which, as a rule, should be deepened directly over the cheek bones and at the outer corner of the eyes.

Lips that are pale, harsh, and dry are often improved by rubbing them carefully with a fatty lip salve that has been colored with carmine. Care should be exercised to follow the line of the lips, as noticeable artificiality of the mouth is most distressing, and has its place only on the stage.

The powder used must also be carefully considered, women with dark skins requiring a less vivid rouge and a brunette powder, while blondes can "stand" a higher color. Very little powder is necessary, but that little should be used to tone down the rouge and remove shine and oil, both of which mar the fairest skin.

The time to "make up" is before the hair is finally dressed, as it would otherwise interfere with the coiffure. The matter of its becomingness depends largely, too, upon the condition of the

complexion. Many women find that they cannot dress the hair well at all if the complexion is pale or sallow or haggard; a little color completely transforms an erstwhile uninteresting woman into one with a story to tell, and lends to everything a more roseate hue. Then, a little arch to the brows adds a bit of coquetry to every glance, and — Yes, the seclusion that a boudoir affords is an excellent thing.

Note: Recipes for the aforesaid "make-up" cosmetics are available to all readers on proper application.

Answers to Queries

HELEN.—No, do *not* pull out superfluous hairs. You will find it stimulates to increased growth. I do not advise the employment of depilatories. The effect is not only temporary, but also stimulates a heavier and coarser growth in most instances. An ointment suggested by a French specialist de-vitalizes the hair. It does not remove it, as some of my readers believe, but destroys it gradually. If immediate results are desired, this is not the treatment to use. Electrolysis is sure, but also necessarily slow, if the growth is extensive.

E. S. S.—Send a self-addressed, stamped envelope for pipple cure.

STOUT.—I cannot advise the use of any drug or internal measures for flesh reduction. Every now and then some "get-thin-quick" method is foisted upon the public, the name of a well-known person being affixed thereto in order to secure public confidence. Some of these methods may be harmless, and therefore unsuccessful and unreliable; others, by means of powerful purgatives or saline compounds, reduce not only the flesh, but vitality to an alarming extent, and in some cases the loss of health is permanent. Only dieting, exercise, and hygienic living can effect reduction in weight while maintaining and even promoting a high standard of strength and vigor.

GRAY HAIR.—I am sorry that you have obtained no results from the mixture of sage, iron, and tar. Did you have it properly compounded by a reliable chemist? And did you apply it experimentally until you se-

cured exactly the strength of the ingredients that your particular condition called for? Unless it is used intelligently, one is very apt to fail, even with so excellent and reliable a formula as that of the sage hair restorer. It is just possible that you might do better with this:

Tincture of acetate of iron.....	½ ounce
Sulphate of potassium.....	2½ grains
Glycerin	¼ ounce
Water	½ pint

After exposure to the air for several hours, add:

Oil of lavender	10 drops
-----------------------	----------

Rub into the scalp thoroughly at bedtime

BLANCHE.—It does seem that blondes do not come in for their full share of advice. Why have you not applied before? Try this — it is an excellent hair grower:

Bisulphate of quinine.....	1 dram
Tincture of cantharides	½ ounce
Listerine	7 ounces

Brush the scalp thoroughly night and morning; then rub in the tonic vigorously.

HOUSEWIFE.—You must have overlooked my reference to "kitchen cosmetics" in a previous article. The subject is too lengthy to enter into here. Directions on the care of the complexion and the hands will be sent to you on proper application for the same.

MRS. X.—Your letter must have miscarried. Full directions for the treatment of wrinkles will be mailed on receipt of a stamped, addressed envelope.

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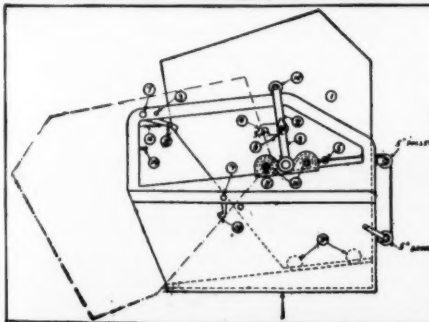
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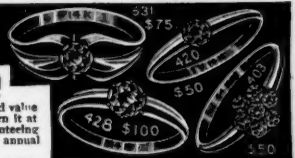


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Leigh Gordon Giltner has also written a novel which is guaranteed to make you forget all your troubles while you are reading it. A man marries a girl he doesn't want to marry. He does it because the two have been placed in a compromising situation. A foolish sort of chivalry perhaps—and then there was the other girl who expected to marry the man!

Then there are short stories—you don't feel as if you were reading them. It seems like living through the scenes yourself. "The Fulfillment," by Rebecca Hooper Eastman, is one of the greatest short love stories published in years. "Going After It," by Holman F. Day, is a roaring gale of fun and comedy. "The Livery Man," by Carolyn Wells, is as clever as you would expect it to be. Then there is the diary of the quaint and original little girl who explains "Why I Like an Exciting Town." Mary Patterson has copied the diary for us. And all the other stories are just as good.

Of course it is well to think of the physical now and then. And, physically speaking, one of the best ways to be happy is to be beautiful. Dr. Lillian Whitney tells how to do it. All this and a lot more in the next number of

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Kennebunkport, Me., Candlemas, 1915

Dear Colgate Co.:

This is my outlook on life here on my farm, and you have done much to sweeten it with your soaps and perfumes. It is twenty below zero here this morning with a fierce wind blowing. I have to keep moving all the time in my kitchen to keep warm though I have two raging fires; when I put my dish cloth down it freezes to the boards.

My mother says father used to give her a box of your Cashmere Bouquet Soap every Christmas when she was first married in 1861. I always have a cake of it among my shirt waists. All around me are the deep, dark pine woods: I love the tall pine trees against the sky; their stately, calm strength is restful. Over in my wood lot there is the ringing chock of the axe where the husky Canadian choppers are at work. Their appetites "will cut like a bush scythe in swale grass."

As I write I can hear the roar of the surf at the Bluff and the fog horn on Cape Porpoise.

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(Name of writer sent on request.)

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